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*JOHNSONIAN MISCELLANIES*

. G. BIRKBECK HILL

. VOL. II.

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*JOHNSONIAN*  
*MISCELLANIES*

ARRANGED AND EDITED

BY

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AND OF 'THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON'

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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## APOPHTHEGMS, SENTIMENTS OPINIONS, & OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS<sup>1</sup>

---

DR. JOHNSON used to say, that where secrecy or mystery began, vice or roguery was not far off; and that he leads in general an ill life, who stands in fear of no man's observation<sup>2</sup>.

When a friend of his who had not been very lucky in his first wife, married a second, he said—Alas! another instance of the triumph of hope over experience<sup>3</sup>.

Of Sheridan's writings on Elocution, he said, they were a continual renovation of hope, and an unvaried succession of disappointments<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> From the eleventh volume of Sir John Hawkins's edition of Johnson's *Works* (pp. 195-216), published in 1787-9, in 13 vols. 8vo. Many of the 'Apophthegms,' &c., there included, which had been copied from Steevens's Collection in the *European Magazine* for January, 1875, will be found *post*, under *Anecdotes by George Steevens*. One or two, moreover, which in like manner were borrowed from Seward, will be found *post*, under his name.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, i. 326, for his dislike of 'mysteriousness in trifles,' and *post*, p. 8, for 'the vices of retirement.' Boswell, recounting how Johnson in the Oxford post-coach 'talked without reserve of the state of his affairs,' continues:—'Indeed his

openness with people at a first interview was remarkable.' *Life*, iv. 284. See *post*, in Seward's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 128. The Lord Chancellor Audley, in his speech in parliament on Henry VIII's troubles in his two first marriages, said:—'What man of middle condition would not this deter from marrying a third time? Yet this our most excellent prince again condescends to contract matrimony.' *Parl. Hist.* i. 528.

<sup>4</sup> For Johnson's contempt of Sheridan's oratory see *Life*, i. 453, iv. 222.

In the *Life*, ii. 122, this anecdote is thus recorded on the authority of Dr. Maxwell:—'Of a certain player he remarked, that his conversation usually threatened and announced

He used to say, that no man read long together with a folio on his table:—Books, said he, that you may carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all. He would say, such books form the man of general and easy reading<sup>1</sup>.

He was a great friend to books like the French *Esprits d'un tel*; for example, *Beauties of Watts*<sup>2</sup>, &c., &c., at which, said he, a man will often look and be tempted to go on, when he would have been frightened at books of a larger size and of a more erudite appearance.

Being once asked if he ever embellished a story—No, said he; a story is to lead either to the knowledge of a fact or character, and is good for nothing if it be not strictly and literally true<sup>3</sup>.

Round numbers, said he, are always false<sup>4</sup>.

Watts's *Improvement of the Mind* was a very favourite book with him<sup>5</sup>; he used to recommend it, as he also did *Le Dictionnaire portatif* of the Abbé L'Avocat<sup>6</sup>.

more than it performed; that he fed you with a continual renovation of hope, to end in a constant succession of disappointment.'

According to the *Edinburgh Courier*, June 16, 1792, this player was Macklin. Foote accused him 'of reading in the morning for the purpose of shewing off at night.' Cooke's *Memoirs of Macklin*, p. 246. See *post*, in Steevens's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>1</sup> 'Johnson advised me to read just as inclination prompted me, which alone, he said, would do me any good; for I had better go into company than read a set task.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> In 1781 *The Beauties of Johnson* was published. *Life*, iv. 148. According to Dr. Anderson (*Life of Johnson*, ed. 1815, p. 231) the selection was made by Thomson Callender, the nephew of the poet Thomson, who eleven years later fled to America to escape a prosecution for his *Political Progress of Great Britain*. There

he distinguished himself by the violence of his attacks, first on Washington and John Adams, and next on Jefferson. *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* It was a long step from *The Beauties of Johnson*.

Lamb wrote on Feb. 26, 1808:—'We have *Specimens of Ancient English Poets*, *Specimens of Modern English Poets*, *Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers* without end. They used to be called *Beauties*. You have seen *Beauties of Shakespeare*; so have many people that never saw any beauties in Shakespeare.' Ainger's *Letters of Lamb*, i. 244.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 225.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iii. 226, n. 4.

<sup>5</sup> In his *Life of Watts* he says:—'Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his *Improvement of the Mind*.' *Works*, viii. 385.

<sup>6</sup> This work is not in the British Museum.

He

He has been accused of treating Lord Lyttelton roughly in his life of him; he assured a friend, however, that he kept back a very ridiculous anecdote of him, relative to a question he put to a great divine of his time<sup>1</sup>.

Johnson's account of Lord Lyttelton's envy to Shenstone for his improvements in his grounds, &c.<sup>2</sup>, was confirmed by an ingenious writer. Spence was in the house for a fortnight with the Lytteltons, before they offered to shew him Shenstone's place.

When accused of mentioning ridiculous anecdotes in the lives of the poets, he said, he should not have been an exact biographer if he had omitted them. The business of such a one, said he, is to give a complete account of the person whose life he is writing, and to discriminate him from all other persons by any peculiarities of character or sentiment he may happen to have<sup>3</sup>.

He spoke Latin with great fluency and elegance. He said, indeed, he had taken great pains about it<sup>4</sup>.

A very famous schoolmaster said, he had rather take Johnson's

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Lyttelton*, suppressed an anecdote which would have made his memory ridiculous. He was a man rather melancholy in his disposition, and used to declare to his friends, that when he went to Vauxhall he always supposed pleasure to be in the next box to his—at least, that he himself was so unhappily situated as always to be in the wrong box for it.' *European Magazine*, 1798, p. 376.

For the *Life of Lyttelton* see *Life*, iv. 57, 64.

<sup>2</sup> 'For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the little fellow that was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees the Leasowes forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end

of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain.' *Works*, viii. 410.

<sup>3</sup> Malone, recording a conversation with Johnson about the account he gave of Addison's reclaiming his loan to Steele by an execution, continues:—'I then mentioned to him that some people thought that Mr. Addison's character was so pure, that the fact, *though true*, ought to have been suppressed. He saw no reason for this. "If nothing but the bright side of characters should be shewn, we should sit down in despondency, and think it utterly impossible to imitate them in *any thing*." *Life*, iv. 53. 'M'Leod asked, if it was not wrong in Orrery to expose the defects of a man with whom he lived in intimacy. JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir, after the man is dead; for then it is done historically." *Ib.* v. 238.

See also *ib.* i. 9, 30, 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* ii. 125, 404. *Ante*, i. 417.

opinion about any Latin composition, than that of any other person in England.

Dr. Sumner, of Harrow<sup>1</sup>, used to tell this story of Johnson: they were dining one day, with many other persons, at Mrs. Macaulay's; she had talked a long time at dinner about the natural equality of mankind; Johnson, when she had finished her harangue, rose up from the table, and with great solemnity of countenance, and a bow to the ground, said to the servant, who was waiting behind his chair, Mr. John, pray be seated in my place, and permit me to wait upon you in my turn: your mistress says, you hear, that we are all equal<sup>2</sup>.

When some one was lamenting Foote's unlucky fate in being kicked in Dublin, Johnson said he was glad of it; he is rising in the world, said he: when he was in England, no one thought it worth while to kick him<sup>3</sup>.

He was much pleased with the following repartee: *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili*, said a French physician to his colleague, in speaking of the disorder of a poor man that understood Latin, and who was brought into an hospital; *corpus non tam vile est*, says the patient, *pro quo Christus ipse non dedignatus est mori*<sup>4</sup>.

Johnson used to say, a man was a scoundrel that was afraid of any thing<sup>5</sup>.

After having disused swimming for many years, he went into the river at Oxford, and swam away to a part of it that he had been told of as a dangerous place, and where some one had been drowned<sup>6</sup>.

He waited on Lord Marchmont<sup>7</sup> to make some inquiries after particulars of Mr. Pope's life; his first question was,—What kind of a man was Mr. Pope in his conversation? his lordship answered, that if the conversation did not take something

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 447; iii. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 424.

<sup>4</sup> 'Let the experiment be tried on a worthless body.' 'Not so worthless is the body for which Christ himself thought it no scorn to die.'

<sup>5</sup> For Johnson's one dread see *post*, p. 16; for his use of the word scoundrel see *Life*, iii. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* ii. 299.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* iii. 392. Lord Marchmont's daughter gave Sir Walter Scott 'personal reminiscences of Pope.' Lockhart's *Scott*, ed. 1839, i. 343.

of a lively or epigrammatic turn, he fell asleep, or perhaps pretended to do so<sup>1</sup>.

Talking one day of the patronage the great sometimes affect to give to literature, and literary men:—‘Andrew Millar,’ says he, ‘is the Mæcenas of the age’<sup>2</sup>.

Of the state of learning among the Scots, he said:—‘It is with their learning as with provisions in a besieged town, every one has a mouthful, and no one a bellyfull’<sup>3</sup>.

Of Sir Joshua Reynolds he requested three things; that he would not work on a Sunday; that he would read a portion of Scripture on that day; and that he would forgive him a debt which he had incurred for some benevolent purpose<sup>4</sup>.

When he first felt the stroke of palsy, he prayed to God that he would spare his mind, whatever he thought fit to do with his body<sup>5</sup>.

To some lady who was praising Shenstone’s poems very much, and who had an Italian greyhound lying by the fire, he said, ‘Shenstone holds amongst poets the same rank your dog holds amongst dogs; he has not the sagacity of the hound, the docility of the spaniel, nor the courage of the bull-dog, yet he is still a pretty fellow’<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ‘When he wanted to sleep he “nodded in company”; and once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.’ *Works*, viii. 309.

<sup>2</sup> For Andrew Millar, the bookseller, see *Life*, i. 287, n. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* ii. 363.

Sir Walter Scott, in his Address at the opening of the Edinburgh Academy, quoting Johnson’s saying, continued:—‘Sturdy Scotsman as he was, he was not more attached to Scotland than to truth; and it must be admitted that there was some foundation for the Doctor’s remark.’ Lockhart’s *Scott*, ed. 1839, vii. 271. ‘A Scotchman must be a very sturdy moralist who does not love Scotland better than truth.’ *Life*, ii. 311, n. 4.

<sup>4</sup> In these requests Reynolds ‘readily acquiesced.’ However, after a time he resumed his Sunday work. *Ib.* iv. 414, n. 1. ‘Sir Godfrey Kneller,’ according to Pope, ‘called employing the pencil the prayer of a painter.’ Warton’s *Pope’s Works*, ed. 1822, viii. 213. See *post*, p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> Describing the stroke to Mrs. Thrale, he wrote:—‘I was alarmed and prayed God that however he might afflict my body he would spare my understanding. This prayer that I might try the integrity of my faculties I made in Latin verse.’ *Letters*, ii. 301; *Life*, iv. 230; *ante*, i. 111.

<sup>6</sup> ‘We talked of Shenstone. Dr. Johnson said he was a good layer-out of land, but would not allow him to approach excellence as a poet.’ *Ib.* v. 267.

Johnson said he was better pleased with the commendations bestowed on his account of the Hebrides than on any book he had ever written. Burke, says he, thought well of the philosophy of it; Sir William Jones of the observations on language; and Mr. Jackson of those on trade<sup>1</sup>.

Of Foote's wit and readiness of repartee he thought very highly;—'He was,' says he, 'the readiest dog at an escape I ever knew; if you thought you had him on the ground fairly down, he was upon his legs and over your shoulders again in an instant<sup>2</sup>.'

When some one asked him, whether they should introduce Hugh Kelly, the author, to him;—'No, Sir,' says he, 'I never desire to converse with a man who has written more than he has read.' Yet when his play was acted for the benefit of his widow, Johnson furnished a prologue<sup>3</sup>.

He repeated poetry with wonderful energy and feeling. He was seen to weep whilst he repeated Goldsmith's character of the English in his *Traveller*, beginning thus:

'Stern o'er each bosom,' &c.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Johnson observed, that every body commended such parts of his *Journey to the Western Islands*, as were in their own way. "For instance, (said he,) Mr. Jackson (the all-knowing) told me there was more good sense upon trade in it, than he should hear in the House of Commons in a year, except from Burke. Jones commended the part which treats of language; Burke that which describes the inhabitants of mountainous countries." ' *Life*, iii. 137. It was in the reflections on the life and economy of the Highlanders, and on the changes rapidly taking place in the clan system, that 'the philosophy' was found.

For Jackson see *ib.* iii. 19; *Letters*, ii. 349.

<sup>2</sup> 'One species of wit Foote has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with

both hands; but he's gone, Sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head.' *Life*, iii. 69. 'Foote is the most incompressible fellow that I ever knew; when you have driven him into a corner, and think you are sure of him, he runs through between your legs, or jumps over your head, and makes his escape.' *ib.* v. 391.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* iii. 113; *ante*, i. 181, 432.

'On reading over this Prologue to Dr. Johnson the morning after it was spoken, the Doctor told me that instead of *renewed hostilities* he wrote *vengeful petulance*, and did not seem pleased with the alteration.' MS. note by Rev. J. Hussey.

The couplet as altered, stands:—  
'Let no renewed hostilities invade  
Th' oblivious grave's inviolable  
shade.'

<sup>4</sup> It was at Oban that this happened.  
He

He was supposed to have assisted Goldsmith very much in that poem, but has been heard to say, that he might have contributed three or four lines, taking together all he had done<sup>1</sup>.

He held all authors very cheap, that were not satisfied with the opinion of the publick about them. He used to say, that every man who writes, thinks he can amuse or inform mankind, and they must be the best judges of his pretensions<sup>2</sup>.

Of Warburton he always spoke well. He gave me, says he, his good word when it was of use to me. Warburton, in the Preface to his Shakespeare, has commended Johnson's Observations on Macbeth<sup>3</sup>.

Two days before he died, he said, with some pleasantry,—Poor Johnson is dying; \*\*\*\* will say, he dies of taking a few grains more of squills than were ordered him; \*\*\*\* will say, he dies of the scarifications made by the surgeon in his leg<sup>4</sup>. His last act of understanding is said to have been exerted in giving his blessing to a young lady that requested it of him<sup>5</sup>.

He was always ready to assist any authors in correcting their works, and selling them to booksellers.—I have done writing, said he, myself, and should assist those that do write<sup>6</sup>.

pened. 'We talked of Goldsmith's *Traveller*, of which Dr. Johnson spoke highly; and, while I was helping him on with his great coat, he repeated from it the character of the British nation, which he did with such energy, that the tear started into his eye.' *Life*, v. 344.

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.* ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iv. 172; *post*, p. 19. Smollett, writing of the Age of George II, says:—'Genius in writing spontaneously arose; and, though neglected by the great, flourished under the culture of a public which had pretensions to taste, and piqued itself on encouraging literary merit.' *History of England*, ed. 1800, v. 379.

'When somebody was highly praising Milton George II asked, "Why did he not write his *Paradise Lost* in

prose?"' Warton's *Pope's Works*, iv. 199, n.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 175; iv. 288. Johnson, in his *Shakespeare*, often ridicules Warburton. See *ante*, i. 381, and *post*, in Steevens's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>4</sup> The supposed speakers were Brocklesby and Heberden. The wit has been lost in the narration; for what Johnson said see *post*, in Windham's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iv. 418; *ante*, i. 447, n. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* ii. 195; iii. 373; iv. 121.

The Rev. John Hussey wrote on his copy of the first edition of Boswell, opposite a passage about profits of authors (*Ib.* iv. 121):—'Mem. Mr. Townshend's manuscripts. I think it was Mr. Allen, the late Minister of Wandsworth, who told me that Mr. Townshend (if that were his name, he was afterwards either

When



When some one asked him for what he should marry, he replied, first, for virtue; secondly, for wit; thirdly, for beauty; and fourthly, for money<sup>1</sup>.

He thought worse of the vices of retirement than of those of society<sup>2</sup>.

He attended Mr. Thrale in his last moments, and stayed in the room praying, as is imagined, till he had drawn his last breath.—His servants, said he, would have waited upon him in this awful period, and why not his friend<sup>3</sup>?

He was extremely fond of reading the lives of great and learned persons<sup>4</sup>. Two or three years before he died, he applied to a friend of his to give him a list of those in the French language that were well written and genuine. He said, that Bolingbroke had declared he could not read Middleton's life of Cicero<sup>5</sup>.

He was a great enemy to the present fashionable way of supposing worthless and infamous persons mad.

He was not apt to judge ill of persons without good reasons;

Printer or Stationer to the East India Company) in the early part of his life was seized with the *cacoethes scribendi*, and having finished a Pamphlet wished much to have Mr. Johnson's opinion of it, before he offered it to the Publick. So without any previous knowledge or introduction, he called on Johnson, and humbly requested him to peruse the Manuscript of his first production; which was with great good nature immediately acquiesced in: when he had finished it he said to Mr. Townshend, "Pray, Sir, are you of any profession?" "A Printer, at your service." "Then, Sir, I would recommend you to print any work rather than your own; it will turn out more to your advantage if you get paid for it, and if it be worth printing, infinitely more to your credit." This interview Townshend spoke of in his latter days with grateful remem-

brance; a different reception, he said, would have flattered his vanity and allured him to poverty and contempt.'

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, ii. 128; iv. 131.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* v. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* iv. 84; *ante*, i. 96.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* i. 425; v. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson would not read Bolingbroke's works—at all events his Philosophical works. *Ib.* i. 330.

'My Lord Bolingbroke has lost his wife. . . . Dr. Middleton told me a compliment she made him two years ago which I thought pretty. She said she was persuaded that he was a very great writer, for she understood his works better than any other English book, and that she had observed that the best writers were always the most intelligible.' [She was a Frenchwoman.] Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 202.

an old friend of his used to say, that in general he thought too well of mankind<sup>1</sup>.

One day, on seeing an old terrier lie asleep by the fire-side at Streatham, he said, Presto, you are, if possible, a more lazy dog than I am<sup>2</sup>.

Being told that Churchill had abused him under the character of Pomposo, in his Ghost,—I always thought, said he, he was a shallow fellow and I think so still<sup>3</sup>.

When some one asked him how he felt at the indifferent reception of his tragedy at Drury-lane;—Like the Monument, said he, and as unshaken as that fabrick<sup>4</sup>.

Being asked by Dr. Lawrence what he thought the best system of education, he replied,—School in school-hours, and home-instruction in the intervals<sup>5</sup>.

I would never, said he, desire a young man to neglect his business for the purpose of pursuing his studies, because it is unreasonable; I would only desire him to read at those hours when he would otherwise be unemployed. I will not promise that he will be a Bentley; but if he be a lad of any parts, he will certainly make a sensible man<sup>6</sup>.

The picture of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which was painted for Mr. Beauclerk, and is now Mr. Langton's, and scraped in

<sup>1</sup> 'As he was ever one of the most quick-sighted men I ever knew in discovering the good and amiable qualities of others, so was he ever inclined to palliate their defects.' Hawkins, p. 50.

'Reynolds said of Johnson:—"He was not easily imposed upon by professions to honesty and candour; but he appeared to have little suspicion of hypocrisy in religion."' Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 459. See also *Life*, ii. 236.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 189.

<sup>3</sup> 'No, Sir, I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I will call him a blockhead still. However, I will acknowledge that I have a better opinion of him now, than I once

had; for he has shewn more fertility than I expected. To be sure, he is a tree that cannot produce good fruit: he only bears crabs. But, Sir, a tree that produces a great many crabs is better than a tree which produces only a few.' *Life*, i. 418. See also *ib.* i. 406.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* i. 199.

<sup>5</sup> See *ante*, i. 161, where he opposed the imposition of holiday tasks by the schoolmaster. For Dr. Lawrence see *Life*, ii. 296.

<sup>6</sup> 'Snatches of reading (said Johnson) will not make a Bentley or a Clarke. They are however in a certain degree advantageous.' *ib.* iv. 21.

mezzotinto by Doughty, is extremely like him; there is in it that appearance of a labouring working mind, of an indolent reposing body, which he had to a very great degree. Beauclerk wrote under his picture,

— '*ingenium ingens*  
*Inculto habet hoc sub corpore*'<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the common operations of dressing, shaving, &c., were a toil to him; he held the care of the body very cheap<sup>2</sup>. He used to say, that a man who rode out for an appetite consulted but little the dignity of human nature.

He was much pleased with an Italian *improvvisatore*, whom he saw at Streatham, and with whom he talked much in Latin. He told him, if he had not been a witness to his faculty himself, he should not have thought it possible. He said, Isaac Hawkins Browne<sup>3</sup> had endeavoured at it in English, but could not get beyond thirty verses.

When a Scotsman was one day talking to him of the great writers of that country that were then existing, he said: 'We have taught that nation to write<sup>4</sup>, and do they pretend to be our teachers? let me hear no more of the tinsel of Robertson, and the foppery of Dalrymple<sup>5</sup>.' He said, Hume has taken his style from Voltaire<sup>6</sup>. He would never hear Hume mentioned with any temper:—'A man,' said he, 'who endeavoured to persuade his friend who had the stone to shoot himself'.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 458; *Life*, iv. 180.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 241; *Life*, i. 396; ii. 406.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 266.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Beattie wrote on Jan. 5, 1778:—'We who live in Scotland are obliged to study English from books, like a dead language, which we understand, but cannot speak.' He adds:—'I have spent some years in labouring to acquire the art of giving a vernacular cast to the English we write.' Forbes's *Beattie*, p. 243.

<sup>5</sup> 'Doubtless Goldsmith's *History* is better than the *verbiage* of Robertson or the foppery of Dal-

rymple.' *Life*, ii. 236.

<sup>6</sup> 'When I talked of our advancement in literature, "Sir, (said he,) you have learnt a little from us, and you think yourselves very great men. Hume would never have written History, had not Voltaire written it before him. He is an echo of Voltaire."' *Ib.* ii. 53.

Wordsworth said:—'the Scotch historians did infinite mischief to style, with the exception of Smollett, who wrote good pure English.' Wordsworth's *Life*, ii. 459. See *Life*, i. 439, for Hume's style.

<sup>7</sup> Seven years after Hume's death  
Upon

Upon hearing a lady of his acquaintance commended for her learning, he said :—‘ A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table, than when his wife talks Greek. My old friend, Mrs. Carter <sup>1</sup>, said he, could make a pudding, as well as translate Epictetus from the Greek, and work a handkerchief as well as compose a poem.’ He thought she was too reserved in conversation upon subjects she was so eminently able to converse upon, which was occasioned by her modesty and fear of giving offence <sup>2</sup>.

Being asked whether he had read Mrs. Macaulay’s second volume of the History of England ;—‘ No, Sir,’ says he, ‘ nor her

‘ a work was published in London called *Essays on Suicide and the Immortality of the Soul*, ascribed to the late David Hume, Esq. That Hume wrote these Essays, and intended to publish them, is an incident in his life which ought not to be passed over; but it is also part of his history that he repented of the act at the last available moment, and suppressed the publication.’ J. H. Burton’s *Hume*, ii. 13. See also *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, pp. 230–3, 355, 362. The work was published not seven years, but one year after his death. In the *Essay on Suicide* he says :—‘ Let us here endeavour to restore men to their native liberty by examining all the common arguments against suicide, and shewing that that action may be free from every imputation of guilt or blame, according to the sentiments of all the ancient philosophers.’ Ed. 1777, p. 5. On p. 15 he says :—‘ When the horror of pain prevails over the love of life; when a voluntary action anticipates the effects of blind causes, ’tis only in consequence of those powers and principles which he [the supreme creator] has implanted in his creatures.’

I cannot find any account of his

endeavouring to persuade his friend to shoot himself. Perhaps it was assumed that the Essay was written for some one man.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 122, n. 4. ‘ Dr. Johnson maintained to me, contrary to the common notion, that a woman would not be the worse wife for being learned.’ *Ib.* ii. 76. See also *ib.* v. 226.

‘ It is, indeed, an unhappy circumstance in a family, where the wife has more knowledge than the husband; but it is better it should be so than that there should be no knowledge in the whole house.’ Addison’s *Works*, ed. 1864, iv. 319. ‘ If I had a daughter,’ wrote Lord Chesterfield, ‘ I would give her as much learning as a boy.’ Chesterfield’s *Letters to A. C. Stanhope*, ed. 1817, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> She is, no doubt, the Lady meant in the following passage in *Sir Charles Grandison* (ed. 1754, i. 63), where Miss Byron says :—‘ Who, I, a woman know anything of Latin and Greek! I know but one Lady who is mistress of both; and she finds herself so much an owl among the birds, that she wants of all things to be thought to have unlearned them.’

first

first neither<sup>1</sup>. He would not be introduced to the Abbé Raynal, when he was in England<sup>2</sup>.

He said, that when he first conversed with Mr. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, he was very much inclined to believe he had been there; but that he had afterwards altered his opinion<sup>3</sup>.

He was much pleased with Dr. Jortin's Sermons, the language of which he thought very elegant<sup>4</sup>; but thought his life of Erasmus a dull book.

He was very well acquainted with Psalmanaazar, the pretended Formosan, and said, he had never seen the close of the life of any one that he wished so much his own to resemble, as that of him, for its purity and devotion. He told many anecdotes of him; and said he was supposed by his accent to have been a Gascon. He said, that Psalmanaazar spoke English with the city accent, and coarsely enough. He for some years spent his evenings at a publick house near Old-Street<sup>5</sup>, where many persons went to talk with him; Johnson was asked whether he ever contradicted Psalmanaazar;—'I should as soon,' said he, 'have thought of contradicting a bishop<sup>6</sup>;' so high did he hold

<sup>1</sup> Of her he said:—'She is better employed at her toilet, than using her pen. It is better she should be reddening her own cheeks, than blackening other people's characters.' *Life*, iii. 46. In the Sale Catalogue of his Library, Lot 68 is 'Macaulay's *History of England*, 2 v. 1763-5.'

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Chapone wrote to Mrs. Carter on June 15, 1777:—'I suppose you have heard a great deal of the Abbé Raynal, who is in London. I fancy you would have served him as Dr. Johnson did, to whom when Mrs. Vesey introduced him, he turned from him, and said he had read his book, and would have nothing to say to him.' Mrs. Chapone's *Posthumous Works*, i. 172. His book was burnt by the common hangman in Paris. Carlyle's *French Revolution*, ed. 1857, i. 45. Carlyle wrote to his future wife in 1824:—'If you are for fiery-

spirited men, I recommend you to the Abbé Raynal, whose *History*, at least the edition of 1781, is, to use the words of my tailor respecting Africa, "wan coll (one coal) of burning sulphur."' *Early Letters of T. Carlyle*, ii. 268. See *ante*, i. 211.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 365, n. 1; *Life*, ii. 333; *Letters*, i. 313, n. 1.

Southey, reviewing Lord Valentia's *Travels*, agreed with his lordship in questioning Bruce's statements. 'I think Lord Valentia is rather unfair to Bruce; (wrote Scott) I know that surly Patagonian.' He adds that he must have been in Abyssinia. *Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, Boston, U.S.A. i. 148.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iii. 248; iv. 161; *Letters*, ii. 276, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iv. 187.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* iv. 274. See *ib.* iii. 443-9 for my note on Psalmanazar, and *ante*, i. 266.

his

his character in the latter part of his life. When he was asked whether he had ever mentioned Formosa before him, he said, he was afraid to mention even China.

He thought *Cato* the best model of tragedy we had<sup>1</sup>; yet he used to say, of all things, the most ridiculous would be, to see a girl cry at the representation of it<sup>2</sup>.

He thought the happiest life was that of a man of business, with some literary pursuits for his amusement; and that in general no one could be virtuous or happy, that was not completely employed<sup>3</sup>.

Johnson had read much in the works of Bishop Taylor; in his Dutch Thomas à Kempis he has quoted him occasionally in the margin<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, i. 185, for Johnson's random talk about authors, and *Life*, i. 199, n. 2, and *Works*, vii. 456, for his criticism of *Cato* in his *Life of Addison*. In the Preface to his *Shakespeare* he says (ed. 1765, p. 35):—'*Voltaire* expresses his wonder that our authour's extravagancies are endured by a nation which has seen the tragedy of *Cato*. Let him be answered, that *Addison* speaks the language of poets and *Shakespeare* of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamour us of its authour, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions. . . . We pronounce the name of *Cato*, but we think on *Addison*.'

'I have always thought that those pompous Roman sentiments are not so difficult to be produced, as is vulgarly imagined. A stroke of nature is worth a hundred such thoughts as "When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,

The post of honour is a private station."

*Cato* is a fine dialogue on liberty and the love of one's country.' J. Warton's *Essay on Pope*, 2nd ed., i. 259;

Warton published this *Essay* fourteen years before Wordsworth was born.

<sup>2</sup> 'A lady observing to one of her maid-servants, when she came in from the play [*Hannah More's Fatal Falsehood*], that her eyes looked red, as if she had been crying, the girl, by way of apology, said, "Well, Ma'am, if I did, it was no harm; a great many respectable people cried too."' H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 164.

<sup>3</sup> 'That accurate judge of human life, Dr. Johnson, has often been heard by me to observe, that it was the greatest misfortune which could befall a man to have been bred to no profession, and pathetically to regret that this misfortune was his own.' *More's Practical Piety*, p. 313. See *Life*, iii. 309. See *ante*, i. 238, n. 2, and *post* in Seward's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>4</sup> 'In the latter part of his life, in order to satisfy himself whether his mental faculties were impaired, he resolved that he would try to learn a new language, and fixed upon the Low Dutch, for that purpose, and this he continued till he had read about one half of *Thomas à Kempis*.' *Life*, iv. 21.

He is said to have very frequently made sermons for clergymen at a guinea a-piece<sup>1</sup>; that delivered by Dr. Dodd, in the chapel of Newgate, was written by him, as was also his Defence, spoken at the bar of the Old Bailey<sup>2</sup>.

Of a certain lady's entertainments, he said,—What signifies going thither? there is neither meat, drink, nor talk<sup>3</sup>.

He advised Mrs. Siddons to play the part of Queen Catherine in *Henry VIII.*<sup>4</sup> and said of her, that she appeared to him to be one of the few persons that the great corruptors of mankind, money and reputation, had not spoiled<sup>5</sup>.

He had a great opinion of the knowledge procured by

<sup>1</sup> 'Johnson was never greedy of money, but without money could not be stimulated to write. I have been told by a clergyman with whom he had been long acquainted, that, being to preach on a particular occasion, he applied to him for help. "I will write a sermon for thee," said Johnson, "but thou must pay me for it."' Hawkins, p. 84. See *ante*, i. 82, and *Life*, v. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iii. 141; *ante*, i. 432.

<sup>3</sup> 'I advised Mrs. Thrale, who has no card-parties at her house, to give sweet-meats, and such good things, in an evening, as are not commonly given, and she would find company enough come to her; for every body loves to have things which please the palate put in their way, without trouble or preparation.' *Life*, iii. 186.

<sup>4</sup> 'He asked her which of Shakespeare's characters she was most pleased with. Upon her answering that she thought the character of Queen Catherine in *Henry the Eighth* the most natural:—"I think so too, Madam, (said he,) and whenever you perform it I will once more hobble out to the theatre myself."' *Ib.* iv. 242.

<sup>5</sup> 'The meek sorrows and virtuous distress of Catherine have furnished some scenes which may be justly

numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy. But the genius of Shakespeare [in *Henry VIII.*] comes in and goes out with Catherine. Every other part may be easily conceived and easily written.' Johnson's *Shakespeare*, ed. 1765, v. 491. Of the second scene of the fourth act he writes: 'This scene is above any other part of Shakespeare's tragedies, and perhaps above any scene of any other poet, tender and pathetick, without gods, or furies, or poisons, or precipices, without the help of romantick circumstances, without improbable sallies of poetical lamentation, and without any throes of tumultuous misery.' *Ib.* p. 462. The piety of the sentiments perhaps influenced his judgement.

<sup>5</sup> He wrote of Mrs. Siddons to Mrs. Thrale:—"Neither praise nor money, the two powerful corrupters of mankind, seem to have depraved her." *Letters*, ii. 345. 'Being asked if he could not wish to compose a part in a new tragedy to display her powers, he replied, "Mrs. Siddons excels in the pathetic, for which I have no talent." Then says his friend, "Imperial tragedy must belong to you" (alluding to his *Irene*). Johnson smiled.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 86.

conversation

conversation with intelligent and ingenious persons<sup>1</sup>. His first question concerning such as had that character, was ever, What is his conversation<sup>2</sup>?

Johnson said of the Chattertonian controversy,—It is a sword that cuts both ways. It is as wonderful to suppose that a boy of sixteen years old had stored his mind with such a train of images and ideas as he had acquired, as to suppose the poems, with their ease of versification and elegance of language, to have been written by Rowley in the time of Edward the Fourth<sup>3</sup>.

Talking with some persons about allegorical painting, he said, 'I had rather see the portrait of a dog that I know, than all the allegorical paintings they can shew me in the world<sup>4</sup>.'

When a Scotsman was talking against Warburton<sup>5</sup>, Johnson said he had more literature than had been imported from Scotland since the days of Buchanan. Upon his mentioning other eminent writers of the Scots,—'These will not do,' said Johnson, 'let us have some more of your northern lights, these are mere farthing candles<sup>6</sup>.'

A Scotsman upon his introduction to Johnson said:—'I am afraid, Sir, you will not like me, I have the misfortune to come from Scotland.' 'Sir,' answered he, 'that is a misfortune; but such a one as you and the rest of your countrymen cannot help<sup>7</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, ii. 361; iii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iv. 19.

<sup>3</sup> 'Johnson said of Chatterton, "This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things."'  
*Ib.* iii. 51.

<sup>4</sup> For his feelings towards art see *ib.* i. 363, n. 3, and *ante*, i. 214.

<sup>5</sup> Fielding, addressing Learning, says:—'Give me a while that key to all thy treasures which to thy Warburton thou hast entrusted.' *Tom Jones*, Bk. xiii. ch. 1. (Warburton was the nephew by marriage of Fielding's patron, Allen.) Johnson told George III that 'he had not read much compared with Dr. Warburton.' *Life*, ii. 36.

On this saying Mr. Pattison remarks:—'A modest admission, yet strictly true, even understood of bare quantity. But Johnson was not thinking of volumes by number. He knew that Warburton's readings ranged over whole classes of books into which he himself had barely dipped.' Mark Pattison's *Essays*, ed. 1889, ii. 122. On p. 131 Pattison says that Bishop Newton, in his parallel between Jortin and Warburton, 'adds that Jortin "was perhaps the better Greek and Latin scholar." "Better" implies comparison. The fact was that Jortin was a scholar in every sense of the word; Warburton in none.'

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, v. 57, 80.

<sup>7</sup> The Scotsman was Boswell; for  
To



To one who wished him to drink some wine and be jolly, adding,—‘You know Sir, *in vino veritas*.’ ‘Sir,’ answered he, ‘this is a good recommendation to a man who is apt to lie when sober<sup>1</sup>.’

When he was first introduced to General Paoli, he was much struck with his reception of him; he said he had very much the air of a man who had been at the head of a nation: he was particularly pleased with his manner of receiving a stranger at his own house, and said it had dignity and affability joined together<sup>2</sup>.

Johnson said, he had once seen Mr. Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield’s son, at Dodsley’s shop, and was so much struck with his awkward manners and appearance, that he could not help asking Mr. Dodsley who he was<sup>3</sup>.

Speaking one day of tea, he said,—What a delightful beverage must that be, that pleases all palates, at a time when they can take nothing else at breakfast<sup>4</sup>!

To his censure of fear in general, he made however one exception, with respect to the fear of death, *timorum maximus*; he thought that the best of us were but unprofitable servants, and had much reason to fear<sup>5</sup>.

Johnson thought very well of Lord Kames’s *Elements of Criticism*; of other of his writings he thought very indifferently, and laughed much at his opinion, that war was a good thing occasionally, as so much valour and virtue were exhibited in it<sup>6</sup>. A fire, says Johnson, might as well be thought a good thing; there is the bravery and address of the firemen employed in

what was really said see *Life*, i. 392, and *ante*, i. 427.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 321; *Life*, ii. 188.

<sup>2</sup> ‘General Paoli (he said) had the loftiest port of any man he had ever seen.’ *Ib.* ii. 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* iv. 333. See my Introduction (p. 43) to the *Worldly Wisdom of Lord Chesterfield*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 414.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 330, 445; *Life*, iv. 299.

<sup>6</sup> Kames, speaking of the ‘less savage aspect’ of modern wars, says:—‘Such wars give exercise to the elevated virtues of courage, gene-

rosity and disinterestedness, which are always attended with consciousness of merit and dignity.’ *Sketches of the History of Man*, ed. 1819, ii. 74. Tennyson, when he wrote *Maud*, thought with him. For Johnson’s estimate of *The Elements of Criticism* see *Life*, i. 393; ii. 89. ‘Adam Smith, on being complimented on the group of great writers who were then reflecting glory on Scotland, said, “Yes, but we must every one of us acknowledge Kames for our master.”’ *Life of Adam Smith* by John Rae, p. 31.

extinguishing

extinguishing it; there is much humanity exerted in saving the lives and properties of the poor sufferers; yet, says he, after all this, who can say a fire is a good thing?

Speaking of schoolmasters, he used to say, they were worse than the Egyptian task-masters of old. No boy, says he, is sure any day he goes to school to escape a whipping: how can the schoolmaster tell what the boy has really forgotten, and what he has neglected to learn; what he has had no opportunities of learning, and what he has taken no pains to get at the knowledge of? yet for any of these, however difficult they may be, the boy is obnoxious to punishment<sup>1</sup>.

He used to say something tantamount to this: When a woman affects learning, she makes a rivalry between the two sexes for the same accomplishments, which ought not to be, their provinces being different<sup>2</sup>. Milton said before him,

‘For contemplation he and valour form’d,  
For softness she and sweet attractive grace’<sup>3</sup>.

He used to say, that in all family-disputes the odds were in favour of the husband, from his superior knowledge of life and manners: he was, nevertheless, extremely fond of the company and conversation of women, and was early in life much attached to a most beautiful woman at Lichfield, of a rank superior to his own<sup>4</sup>.

He never suffered any one to swear before him. When ———, a libertine, but a man of some note, was talking before him, and interlarding his stories with oaths, Johnson said, ‘Sir, all this swearing will do nothing for our story, I beg you will not swear.’ The narrator went on swearing: Johnson said, ‘I must again intreat you not to swear.’ He swore again: Johnson quitted the room<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For the brutality of schoolmasters of old see *Life*, i. 44, n. 2; ii. 144, n. 2; 146, 157. ‘There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other.’ *Life*, ii. 407.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 11. It was the affectation of learning that he disliked,

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not the learning itself.

<sup>3</sup> *Paradise Lost*, iv. 297.

<sup>4</sup> Molly Aston. *Ante*, i. 255.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Davies reminded Dr. Johnson of Mr. Murphy’s having paid him the highest compliment that ever was paid to a layman, by asking his pardon for repeating some oaths in the course of telling a story.’ *Life*, iii. 40.

He

He was no great friend to puns, though he once by accident made a singular one. A person who affected to live after the Greek manner, and to anoint himself with oil, was one day mentioned before him. Johnson, in the course of conversation on the singularity of his practice, gave him the denomination of, This man of *Greece*, or *grease*, as you please to take it<sup>1</sup>.

Of a member of parliament, who, after having harangued for some hours in the house of commons, came into a company where Johnson was, and endeavoured to talk him down, he said, This man has a pulse in his tongue.

He was not displeased with a kind of pun made by a person, who (after having been tired to death by two ladies who talked

<sup>1</sup> 'Obscenity and impiety (he said) have always been repressed in my company.' *Life*, iv. 295. See also *ib.* iii. 189.

Susan Burney, sending her sister a report of a conversation at Streat-ham when Johnson was present, reports Mrs. Thrale as crying out:— 'Good G-d! why somebody else mentioned that book to me.' Mrs. Raine Ellis, who has edited Fanny Burney's *Early Diary* with great skill, says in a footnote:— 'The careless old ejaculations have, in almost every case, been modified, or effaced in the manuscripts of the diaries, old and new; in many cases by Mme. D'Arblay herself, in more by her niece, who was the editor of her later diaries. These almost unmeaning expletives seem to have passed unrebuked by Dr. Johnson in the case of Mrs. Thrale, although he would not suffer Boswell to write "by my soul." ['My illustrious friend said, "It is very well, Sir; but you should not swear."' *Life*, ii. 111.] His ear had become used to them, or she was incorrigible.' *Early Diary of F. Burney*, ii. 234.

<sup>2</sup> 'Johnson had a great contempt for that species of wit.' *Life*, ii. 241. Boswell, recording a pun by John-

son, says:— 'It was the first time that I knew him stoop to such sport.' *Ib.* iii. 325. In his *Dictionary*, he defines *punster* as a *low wit*, who *endeavours at reputation by double meaning*.

Dryden, after quoting Horace's pun on 'Mr. King' (*Satires*, i. 7. 35), continues:— 'But it may be puns were then in fashion, as they were wit in the sermons of the last age and in the Court of King Charles II.' Scott's *Dryden's Works*, xiii. 97.

<sup>3</sup> 'A great Critic formerly held these clenches in such abhorrence that he declared "he that would pun would pick a pocket." Yet Mr. Dennis's works afford us notable examples in this kind.' *The Dunciad*, 2nd ed. i. 61, *n.* Shaftesbury wrote in 1714:— 'All Humour had something of the *Quibble*. The very Language of the Court was *Punning*. But 'tis now banish'd the Town and all Good Company. There are only some few Footsteps of it in the Country; and it seems at last confin'd to the Nurseries of Youth, as the chief Entertainment of Pedants and their Pupils.' *Characteristics*, ed. 1714, i. 64.

<sup>4</sup> 'I never knew an enemy to puns who was not an ill-natured man.' Lamb's *Letters*, ed. 1888, ii. 148.

of

of the antiquity and illustriousness of their families, himself being quite a new man) cried out, with the ghost in Hamlet,

— ‘This eternal blazon  
Must not be to ears of flesh and blood.’

One who had long known Johnson, said of him, In general you may tell what the man to whom you are speaking will say next: this you can never do of Johnson: his images, his allusions, his great powers of ridicule throw the appearance of novelty upon the most common conversation<sup>2</sup>.

He was extremely fond of Dr. Hammond’s Works<sup>3</sup>, and sometimes gave them as a present to young men going into orders: he also bought them for the library at Streatham.

Whoever thinks of going to bed before twelve o’clock, said Johnson, is a scoundrel:—having nothing in particular to do himself, and having none of his time appropriated, he was a troublesome guest to persons who had much to do<sup>4</sup>.

He rose as unwillingly as he went to bed<sup>5</sup>.

He said, he was always hurt when he found himself ignorant of any thing<sup>6</sup>.

He was extremely accurate in his computation of time<sup>7</sup>. He could tell how many heroick Latin verses could be repeated in such a given portion of it; and was anxious that his friends should take pains to form in their minds some measure for estimating the lapse of it.

Of authors he used to say, that as they think themselves wiser or wittier than the rest of the world, the world, after all, must be the judge of their pretensions to superiority over them<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Hamlet*, Act i. sc. 5. l. 21.

<sup>3</sup> W. G. Hamilton said of him:— ‘He has made a chasm which not only nothing can fill up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up. Johnson is dead. Let us go to the next best:—there is nobody; no man can be said to put you in mind of Johnson.’ *Life*, iv. 420.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 107, and *Life*, iii. 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 231. <sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 340.

<sup>7</sup> ‘He observed, “All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is

nothing so minute or inconsiderable, that I would not rather know it than not.”’ *Life*, ii. 357. Reynolds wrote of him:— ‘He sometimes, it must be confessed, covered his ignorance by generals rather than appear ignorant.’ Taylor’s *Reynolds*, ii. 457.

<sup>8</sup> *Life*, i. 72.

<sup>9</sup> ‘He had indeed, upon all occasions, a great deference for the general opinion: “A man (said he) who writes a book, thinks himself wiser or wittier than the rest of man-

Complainers, said he, are always loud and clamorous<sup>1</sup>.

He thought highly of Mandeville's *Treatise on the Hypochondriacal Disease*<sup>2</sup>.

He would not allow the verb *derange*, a word at present much in use, to be an English word. Sir, said a gentleman who had some pretensions to literature, I have seen it in a book. Not in a *bound* book, said Johnson; *disarrange* is the word we ought to use instead of it<sup>3</sup>.

He thought very favourably of the profession of the law<sup>4</sup>, and said, that the sages thereof, for a long series backward, had been friends to religion. Fortescue says, that their afternoon's employment was the study of the Scriptures<sup>5</sup>.

kind; he supposes that he can instruct or amuse them, and the public to whom he appeals must, after all, be the judges of his pretensions.' *Life*, i. 200. See *ante*, ii. 7.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 315.

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise of Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions, vulgarly called Hypo in Men, and Vapours in Women*, 1711.

Of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* he said:—"I read Mandeville forty, or I believe, fifty years ago. He did not puzzle me; he opened my views into life very much." *Life*, iii. 292. See also Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> Neither *derange* nor *disarrange* is in Johnson's *Dictionary*. Of *derange* he might have said that it was a word 'lately innovated from France without necessity.' *Life*, iii. 343.

In a note on 'the wide arch of the rang'd empire,' in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act i. sc. 1, he says:—"It is not easy to guess how Dr. Warburton missed this opportunity of inserting a French word by reading—

"And the wide arch  
Of derang'd empire fall!"—  
Which, if *deranged* were an English

word, would be preferable both to *raised* and *ranged*.' Johnson's *Shakespeare*, ed. 1765, vii. 107.

<sup>4</sup> Attorneys apparently he did not include in the profession of the law. *Life*, ii. 126. He had himself wished to become a lawyer. 'Sir (he said) it would have been better that I had been of a profession. I ought to have been a lawyer.' *Ib.* iii. 309. See *ib.* i. 134, for his wish to practise in Doctors' Commons.

<sup>5</sup> 'Quare Justiciarii, postquam se refecerint, totum Diei residuum pertranseunt studendo in Legibus, sacram legendo Scripturam, et aliter ad eorum Libitum contemplando, ut Vita ipsorum plus contemplativa videatur quam activa. Sicque quietam illi Vitam agunt ab omni Sollicitudine et Mundi Turbinibus semotam.' Fortescue, *De Laudibus*, cap. li.

'When a lawyer, a warm partisan of Lord Chancellor Eldon, called him one of the pillars of the Church; "No," said another lawyer, "he may be one of its buttresses; but certainly not one of its pillars, for he is never found within it."' Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, ed. 1844, iii. 488.

EXTRACTS  
FROM JAMES BOSWELL'S LETTERS  
TO EDMOND MALONE<sup>1</sup>

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DEC. 4. 1790. Let me begin with myself. On the day after your departure, that most friendly fellow Courtenay\* (begging the pardon of an M.P. for so free an epithet) called on me, and took my word and honour that, till the 1st of March, my allowance of wine per diem should not exceed four good glasses at dinner, and a pint after it<sup>3</sup>: and this I have kept, though I have dined with Jack Wilkes<sup>4</sup>; at the London Tavern, after the launch of an Indiaman; with dear Edwards; Dilly<sup>5</sup>; at home with Courtenay; Dr. Barrow<sup>6</sup>; at the mess of the Cold-

\* Published in Croker's *Boswell*, x. 209, from the MSS. in Mr. Upcott's collection.

<sup>2</sup> John Courtenay. In the new Parliament which met on Nov. 25 he sat for Tamworth. For his *Moral and Literary Character of Dr. Johnson* see *Life*, i. 222.

<sup>3</sup> 'Under the solemn yew,' fifteen years earlier, he had promised his friend Temple not to exceed a bottle of old Hock a day. The following year he wrote:—'General Paoli has taken my word of honour that I shall not taste fermented liquor for a year.' *Life*, ii. 436, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Boswell complacently recorded in his Journal:—'When Wilkes and I sat together, each glass of wine produced a flash of wit, like gunpowder thrown into the fire. Puff! puff!' Rogers's *Boswelliana*, p. 322.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Dilly, Boswell's publisher, at whose house 'Johnson owned that he always found a good dinner.' *Life*, iii. 285.

<sup>6</sup> Boswell wrote to Temple on Nov. 28, 1789:—'My second son is an extraordinary boy; he is much of his father (vanity of vanities). . . . He is still in the house with me; indeed he is quite my companion, though only eleven in September. He goes in the day to the academy in Soho Square, kept by the Rev. Dr. Barrow, formerly of Queen's, Oxford, a coarse north-countryman, but a very good scholar.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 315.

Barrow wrote to John James on Jan. 26, 1786:—'The reviews and papers will tell you better than I can, that the booksellers are engaged in a contest who shall publish the first stream;

stream<sup>1</sup>; at the Club; at Warren Hastings's<sup>2</sup>; at Hawkins the Cornish member's<sup>3</sup>; and at home with a colonel of the guards, &c. This *regulation* I assure you is of essential advantage in many respects. The *Magnum Opus* advances. I have revised p. 216<sup>4</sup>. The additions which I have received are a Spanish quotation from Mr. Cambridge<sup>5</sup>; an account of Johnson at Warley Camp from Mr. Langton<sup>6</sup>; and Johnson's letters to Mr. Hastings—three in all<sup>7</sup>—one of them long and admirable; but what sets the diamonds in pure gold of Ophir is a letter from Mr. Hastings to me, illustrating them and their writer. I had this day the honour of a long visit from the late governor-general of India. There is to be no more impeachment<sup>8</sup>. But you will see his character nobly vindicated<sup>9</sup>. Depend upon this.

and best edition of Johnson's *Dictionary*, and that his friends are running a race who shall be foremost in giving, or rather selling, to the world some scrap or fragment of our literary Leviathan—an anecdote, a letter, or a character, a sermon, a prayer, or a bon-mot.' *Letters of Radcliffe and James*, p. 266. 'I do not quite affect John's friend Barrow,' wrote J. Boucher; 'he seems too rough and rugged a northern. He would overawe me.' *Ib.* p. 267.

<sup>1</sup> The Coldstream Guards. Boswell nearly thirty years earlier had described his 'fondness for the Guards.' *Life*, i. 400.

<sup>2</sup> For Hastings's letter to Boswell dated the 2nd of this month see *ib.* iv. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Christopher Hawkins, member for Michell. W. P. Courtney's *Parl. Repres. of Cornwall*, p. 319.

<sup>4</sup> Of the second volume.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iii. 251. In another passage (*ib.* iv. 195) Boswell records a conversation between Cambridge and Johnson about a Spanish translation of Sallust. Dr. Franklin wrote to W. Strahan from Passy, on Dec. 4,

1781:—'A strong Emulation exists at present between Paris and Madrid with regard to beautiful Printing. Here a M. Didot l'aîné has a Passion for the Art, and besides having procured the best Types, he has much improv'd the Press. The utmost Care is taken of his Press-work; his Ink is black, and his Paper fine and white. He has executed several charming Editions. But the Salust [*sic*] and the Don Quixote of Madrid are thought to excel them.'

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, iii. 360.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* iv. 68.

<sup>8</sup> Boswell's hope was from the new Parliament. 'The friends of Hastings entertained a hope that the new House of Commons might not be disposed to go on with the impeachment.' Macaulay's *Essays*, ed. 1843, iii. 455. Their hope was disappointed. Dr. Burney wrote to his daughter on May 7, 1795:—'And so dear Mr. Hastings is honourably acquitted; and I visited him the next morning, and we cordially shook hands.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, vi. 36.

<sup>9</sup> In the *Life of Johnson*, that is to say. See *Life*, iv. 66.

And

And now for my friend. The appearance of Malone's *Shakespeare* on the 29th November was not attended with any external noise; but I suppose no publication seized more speedily and surely on the attention of those for whose critical taste it was chiefly intended<sup>1</sup>. At the Club on Tuesday, where I met Sir Joshua, Dr. Warren, Lord Ossory<sup>2</sup>, Lord Palmerston<sup>3</sup>, Windham, and Burke in the chair,—Burke was so full of his anti-French revolution rage, and poured it out so copiously, that we had almost nothing else<sup>4</sup>. He, however, found time

<sup>1</sup> It was published in ten volumes; 'in fifteen months a large edition was nearly sold.' Unfortunately the type and paper were bad. *Prior's Malone*, p. 168.

Horace Walpole describes it as 'the heaviest of all books, in ten thick octavos, with notes that are an extract of all the opium that is spread through the works of all the bad play-wrights of that age:—mercy on the poor gentleman's patience.' *Letters*, ix. 326.

<sup>2</sup> It was to Lord Ossory's wife that Horace Walpole wrote so many of his letters. In a note to the letter of Feb. 1, 1779 (vii. 169), the following quotation is given from Lord Ossory's *Memoranda*:—'In Italy I became acquainted with Garrick, and from my earliest youth having admired him on the stage, was happy to be familiarly acquainted with him, cultivated his society from that time till his death, and then accompanied him to his grave as one of his pall-bearers. He and Mrs. Garrick (I think it was in 1777) have been with us in the country; Gibbon and Reynolds at the same time, all three delightful in society. The vivacity of the great actor, the keen sarcastic wit of the great historian, and the genuine pleasantry of the great painter, mixed up well together, and made a charming party. Garrick's

mimicry of the mighty Johnson was excellent.'

Reynolds, by his will, left Lord Ossory the first choice of any picture of his own painting. Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 636.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Palmerston, the father of the Prime Minister, when proposed at the Club in 1783 was, writes Johnson, 'against my opinion rejected.' *Life*, iv. 232. He was elected a few months later.

<sup>4</sup> Burke, acknowledging Malone's gift of his *Shakespeare*, sent him his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. 'You have sent me gold,' he wrote, 'which I can only repay you in my brass.' *Prior's Malone*, p. 170.

Horace Walpole wrote of Burke's book (*Letters*, ix. 268):—'Every page shows how sincerely he is in earnest—a wondrous merit in a political pamphlet. All other party writers act zeal for the public, but it never seems to flow from the heart.'

Burke told Malone, in Sept. 1791, that 18,000 copies had been sold, and 12,000 in Paris of the French translation. *Prior's Malone*, p. 183.

Bennet Langton told H. D. Best that 'Burke was rude and violent in dispute; instancing, "if any one asserted that the United States were in the wrong in their quarrel with the mother country, or that England



to praise the clearness and accuracy of your dramatic history; and Windham found fault with you for not taking the profits of so laborious a work. Sir Joshua is pleased, though he would gladly have seen more *disquisition*—you understand me! Mr. Daines Barrington<sup>1</sup> is exceedingly gratified. He regrets that there should be a dryness between you and Steevens<sup>2</sup>, as you have treated him with great respect. I understand that, in a short time, there will not be one of your books to be had for love or money.

Dec. 7. I dined last Saturday at Sir Joshua's with Mr. Burke, his lady, son, and niece, Lord Palmerston, Windham, Dr. Lawrence<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Blagden<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Burney, Sir Abraham Hume, Sir William Scott<sup>5</sup>. I sat next to young Burke at dinner,

had a right to tax America, Burke, instead of answering his arguments, would, if seated next to him, turn away in such a manner as to throw the end of his own tail into the face of the arguer." *Personal and Literary Memorials*, p. 63. Burke no doubt wore his hair tied up in a pig-tail.

<sup>1</sup> Barrington was not a member of the Literary Club. He had belonged to Johnson's Essex Head Club. *Life*, iv. 254.

<sup>2</sup> Steevens, five years earlier, had taken offence at some notes on Shakespeare which Malone furnished to Isaac Reid. Prior's *Malone*, p. 122. Malone wrote to Lord Charlemont on Nov. 15, 1793, about Steevens's last edition of Shakespeare:—"In my new edition I mean to throw down the gauntlet, not by the hints and hesitations of oblique depreciation, as he has on all occasions served me in his late book, but by a fair and direct attack." *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Thirteenth Report, App. viii. 221.

<sup>3</sup> Not Johnson's friend, the physician, who had been dead some years, but Dr. French Lawrence, the

Civilian, whose correspondence with Burke was published in 1827.

<sup>4</sup> "Talking of Dr. Blagden's copiousness and precision of communication, Dr. Johnson said:—"Blagden, Sir, is a delightful fellow." *Life*, iv. 30. Charlotte Burney describes him at a Twelfth Night Ball in 1784 as 'too elegant to undergo the fatigue of dancing.' *Early Diary of F. Burney*, ii. 316. Hannah More (*Memoirs*, ii. 98) met him at Mrs. Montagu's in 1788:—"He is (she wrote) a new blue-stocking and a very agreeable one. He is Secretary to the Royal Society." Later on he became Sir Charles Blagden.

<sup>5</sup> To many of these guests Sir Joshua, who died on Feb. 23, 1792, left bequests—to Burke, £2000, with the cancelling of a bond for the same amount borrowed; to young Burke, a miniature of Oliver Cromwell; to Lord Palmerston, the second choice of any picture of his own painting; to Sir Abraham Hume, the choice of his Claude Lorraines; and to Boswell £200 to be expended in the purchase of one of his pictures.

Malone too, and Burke, as executors, who

who said to me, that you had paid his father a very fine compliment<sup>1</sup>. I mentioned Johnson, to *sound* if there was any objection. He made none. In the evening Burke told me he had read your Henry VI., with all its accompaniment, and it was exceedingly well done. He left us for some time; I suppose on some of his cursed politics; but he returned—I *at* him again, and heard from his lips what, believe me, I delighted to hear, and took care to write down soon after. ‘I have read his History of the Stage, which is a very capital piece of criticism and anti-agrarianism<sup>2</sup>. I shall now read all Shakspeare through, in a very different manner from what I have yet done, when I have got such a commentator.’ Will not this do for you my friend? Burke was admirable company all that day. He never once, I think, mentioned the French revolution<sup>3</sup>, and was easy with me, as in *days of old*<sup>4</sup>.

Dec. 16. I was sadly mortified at the Club on Tuesday, where I was in the chair, and on opening the box found three

had each the same sum left for the same object. Taylor’s *Reynolds*, ii. 636.

Sir William Scott was Dr. Scott (Lord Stowell), who with Reynolds and Hawkins had been Johnson’s executor. He outlived this dinner forty-five years.

<sup>1</sup> ‘At length the task of revising these plays was undertaken by one [Johnson] whose extraordinary powers of mind, as they rendered him the admiration of his contemporaries, will transmit his name to posterity as the brightest ornament of the eighteenth century; and will transmit it without competition, if we except a great orator, philosopher and statesman<sup>1</sup> now living, whose talents and virtues are an honour to human nature.’ Malone’s *Shakspeare*, ed. 1790, i. Preface, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell, I suppose, wrote *anti-agrarianism*.

<sup>3</sup> Burke this day never ‘thought of convincing, while they thought of dining.’

<sup>4</sup> In 1783 Boswell visited Burke at Beaconsfield. *Life*, iv. 210. A few weeks later he wrote:—‘I mentioned my expectations from the interest of an eminent person then in power’ (no doubt Burke). *Id.* p. 223. On May 28, 1794, Malone wrote of the Club:—‘We are now so distracted by party there, in consequence of Windham and Burke, and I might add the whole nation, being on one side, and Fox and his little phalanx on the other, that we in general keep as clear of politics as we can, and did so yesterday.’ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Thirteenth Report, App. viii. 239.

<sup>1</sup> The Right Honourable Edmund Burke. Note by Malone.

balls against General Burgoyne<sup>1</sup>. Present, besides *moi*, Lord Ossory, Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Sir Joseph Banks*, Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Burney, young Burke, Courtenay, *Steevens*. One of the balls, I do believe, was put into the *no* side by Fordyce by mistake<sup>2</sup>. You may guess who put in the other two. The Bishop of Carlisle and Dr. Blagden are put up<sup>3</sup>. I doubt if the latter will be admitted, till Burgoyne gets in first<sup>4</sup>. My work has met with a delay for a little while—not a whole day, however—by an unaccountable neglect in having paper enough in readiness. I have now before me p. 256. My utmost wish is to come forth on Shrove Tuesday (8th March)<sup>5</sup>. 'Wits are game cocks,' &c. Langton is in town, and dines with me to-morrow quietly, and revises his *Collectanea*<sup>6</sup>.

Jan. 18. 1791. I have been so disturbed by sad money-matters, that my mind has been quite fretful: 500*l.* which I

<sup>1</sup> For his defeat at Saratoga, see *Life*, iii. 355. My friend, Mr. E. L. Bigelow, of Marlborough, Mass., U.S.A., has Burgoyne's folio Greek dictionary, one of the spoils of that battle. Richard Tickell celebrates his 'manly sense.' *Ib.* iii. 388 *n.* According to Horace Walpole 'he had written the best modern comedy.' *Letters*, ix. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. George Fordyce. For an anecdote of his drinking see *Life*, ii. 274.

<sup>3</sup> The Bishop (Dr. John Douglas, 'the detector of quacks') was elected on May 22, 1792 (he was at that time Bishop of Salisbury), and Dr. Blagden on March 18, 1794. Croker's *Boswell*, ii. 327.

<sup>4</sup> It was no easy matter to get into the Club. 'When Bishops and Chancellors,' wrote William Jones in 1780, 'honour us by offering to dine with us at a tavern, it seems very extraordinary that we should ever reject such an offer.' *Life of Sir W. Jones*, p. 240.

Malone wrote to Lord Charlemont

on April 5, 1779:—'I have lately made two or three attempts to get into your club, but have not yet been able to succeed—though I have some friends there—Johnson, Burke, Steevens, Sir J. Reynolds and Marlay. At first they said, I think, they thought it a respect to Garrick's memory [see *Life*, i. 481, *n.* 3] not to elect any one for some time in his room.' *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Twelfth Report, App. x. 344. He was elected on Feb. 5, 1782. Croker's *Boswell*, ed. 1844, ii. 327.

'In the height of revolutionary proceedings in France, Rogers, not at all reserved in giving full swing to Whig opinions of the day, came forward as candidate for the Club, and was black-balled. This he attributed to Malone.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 204.

<sup>5</sup> Reynolds wrote to Malone on this day:—'To-day is Shrove Tuesday, and no Johnson.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 174.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, iv. 1.

borrowed

borrowed and lent to a first cousin, an unlucky captain of an Indiaman, were due on the 15th to a merchant in the city. I could not possibly raise that sum, and was apprehensive of being hardly used. He, however, indulged me with an allowance to make partial payments; 150*l.* in two months, 150*l.* in eight months, and the remainder, with the interests, in eighteen months. How I am to manage I am at a loss, and I know you cannot help me. So this, upon my honour, is no hint. I am really tempted to accept of the 1000*l.* for my Life of Johnson. Yet it would go to my heart to sell it at a price which I think much too low. Let me struggle and hope. I cannot be out on *Shrove Tuesday*, as I flattered myself. P. 376. of Vol. II. is ordered for press, and I expect another proof to-night. But I have yet near 200 pages of copy besides letters, and *the death*, which is not yet written. My second volume will, I see, be forty or fifty pages more than my first. Your absence is a woful want in all respects. You will, I dare say, perceive a difference in the part which is revised only by myself, and in which many *insertions* will appear. My spirits are at present bad: but I will mention all I can recollect.

Jan. 29. 1791. You will find this a most desponding and disagreeable letter, for which I ask your pardon. But your vigour of mind and warmth of heart make your friendship of such consequence, that it is drawn upon like a bank. I have, for some weeks, had the most woful return of melancholy, insomuch that I have not only had no relish of any thing, but a continual uneasiness, and all the prospect before me for the rest of life has seemed gloomy and hopeless. The state of my affairs is exceedingly embarrassed. I mentioned to you that the 500*l.* which I borrowed several years ago, and lent to a first cousin, an unfortunate India captain, must now be paid; 150*l.* on the 18th of March, 150*l.* on the 18th of October, and 257*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* on the 18th of July, 1792. This debt presses upon my mind, and it is uncertain if I shall ever get a shilling of it again. The clear money on which I can reckon out of my estate is scarcely 900*l.* a year. What *can* I do? My grave brother urges me to quit London, and live at my seat in the country;

country; where he thinks that I might be able to save so as gradually to relieve myself. But, alas! I should be *absolutely* miserable. In the mean time, such are my projects and sanguine expectations, that you know I purchased an estate which was given long ago to a younger son of our family, and came to be sold last autumn, and paid for it 2500*l.*—1500*l.* of which I borrow upon itself by a mortgage. But the remaining 1000*l.* I cannot conceive a possibility of raising, but by the mode of annuity; which is, I believe, a very heavy disadvantage. I own it was imprudent in me to make a clear purchase at a time I was sadly straitened; but if I had missed the opportunity, it never again would have occurred, and I should have been vexed to see an ancient appanage, a piece of, as it were, the flesh and blood of the family, in the hands of a stranger. And now that I have made the purchase, I should feel myself quite despicable should I give it up.

In this situation, then, my dear Sir, would it not be wise in me to accept of 1000 guineas for my *Life* of Johnson, supposing the person who made the offer should now stand to it, which I fear may not be the case; for two volumes may be considered as a disadvantageous circumstance? Could I indeed raise 1000*l.* upon the credit of the work, I should incline to *game*, as Sir Joshua says<sup>1</sup>; because it *may* produce double the money, though Steevens *kindly* tells me that I have over-printed, and that the curiosity about Johnson is *now* only in our own circle<sup>2</sup>. Pray decide for me; and if, as I suppose, you are for my taking the offer, inform me with whom I am to treat. In my present state of spirits, I am all timidity. Your absence has been a severe stroke to me. I am at present quite at a loss what to do. Last week they gave me six sheets<sup>3</sup>. I have now before me in *proof* p. 456<sup>4</sup>: yet I have above 100 pages of my copy remaining, besides his *death*, which is yet to be written,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps *gamble*, a word not in Johnson's *Dictionary* (where *gambler*, though given, is called 'a cant word'), was in common use, and Reynolds was singular in sticking to an old-fashioned word.

<sup>2</sup> For Steevens's malignancy see *Life*, iii. 281.

<sup>3</sup> 48 pages, as the first edition was in quarto.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. iii. p. 223 of my edition.

and

and many insertions, were there room, as also seven-and-thirty letters, exclusive of twenty to Dr. Brocklesby, most of which will furnish only extracts. I am advised to extract several of those to others, and leave out some; for my first volume makes only 516 pages, and to have 600 in the second will seem awkward, besides increasing the expense considerably<sup>1</sup>. The *counsellor*, indeed, has devised an ingenious way to thicken the first volume, by *prefixing* the index. I have now desired to have but one compositor. Indeed, I go sluggishly and comfortlessly about my work. As I pass your door I cast many a longing look.

I am to cancel a leaf of the first volume, having found that though Sir Joshua certainly assured me he had no objection to my mentioning that Johnson wrote a dedication for him, he now thinks otherwise. In that leaf occurs the mention of Johnson having written to Dr. Leland, thanking the University of Dublin for their diploma<sup>2</sup>. What shall I say as to it?

<sup>1</sup> It contained 588 pages.

<sup>2</sup> The cancel came on vol. i. p. 272 of the first edition. In the second edition a change was made in the order of the paragraphs, by which Dr. Leland and the Dedications were separated by ten pages. In my edition Dr. Leland is found on vol. i. p. 489, and the Dedications on vol. ii. p. 1. By the kindness of my friend, Mr. R. B. Adam, of Buffalo, who has in his collection the proof-sheets of the *Life*, with Boswell's autograph corrections, I am able to give the passage as it first stood. It ran as follows:—'He furnished his friend, Dr. Percy, now Bishop of Dromore, with a Dedication to the Countess of Northumberland, which was prefixed to his collection of "Reliques of ancient English Poetry," in which he pays compliments to that most illustrious family in the most courtly style. It should not be wondered at, that one who can himself write so well as Dr. Percy should accept of a Dedication from Johnson's pen; for as Sir Joshua Reynolds, who we

shall see afterwards accepted of the same kind of assistance, well observed to me, "Writing a dedication is a knack. It is like writing an advertisement."

'In this art no man excelled Dr. Johnson. Though the loftiness of his mind prevented him from ever dedicating in his own person, he wrote a great number of Dedications for others. After all the diligence I have bestowed, some of them have escaped my inquiries. He told me he believed he had dedicated to all the Royal Family round.'

*Advertisement* in the above passage is not used in its modern sense. What we should call the Prefaces to the first and second edition of the *Life*, Boswell calls the *Advertisements*. For the *Advertisements* which Johnson had intended for the English Poets, see *Life*, iv. 35 n.

Percy, in later editions of the *Reliques*, suppressed the Dedication. He wrote to Dr. Anderson:—'Though not wholly written by Dr. Johnson, it owed its finest strokes to his pen, and

I have

I have also room to state shortly the anecdote of the college cook<sup>1</sup>, which I beg you may get for me. I shall be very anxious till I hear from you.

Having harassed you with so much about myself, I have left no room for any thing else. We had a numerous club on Tuesday: Fox in the chair, quoting Homer and Fielding, &c. to the astonishment of Jo. Warton<sup>2</sup>; who, with Langton and Seward, eat a plain bit with me, in my new house, last Saturday. Sir Joshua has put up Dr. Lawrence, who will be blackballed as sure as he exists<sup>3</sup>.

We dined on Wednesday at Sir Joshua's; thirteen *without* Miss P.<sup>4</sup> Himself, Blagden, Batt<sup>5</sup>, [Lawrence<sup>6</sup>,] Erskine<sup>7</sup>, Langton, Dr. Warton, Metcalfe<sup>8</sup>, Dr. Lawrence, his brother, a clergyman, Sir Charles Bunbury<sup>9</sup>, myself.

I could not any longer allow myself to strut in borrowed feathers.' Anderson's *Johnson*, ed. 1815, p. 309.

<sup>1</sup> This, no doubt, is explained by the following correspondence between Malone and Lord Charlemont. Malone wrote on Nov. 7, 1787:—'Dr. Johnson very kindly wrote to some man who was employed in the College kitchen [Trinity College, Dublin] who had a mind to breed his son a scholar, and wrote to Johnson for advice. Perhaps Dr. J. Kearney could recover this.' Charlemont replied:—'The letter to an officer in the College kitchen is well remembered, and John Kearney has promised, if possible, to find it, though he seems almost to despair.' Two days later he wrote:—'The other letter is, I fear, absolutely irrecoverable, as no trace can be found of any papers belonging to the College steward, who has long since been dead.' *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Thirteenth Report, App. viii. 62, 3, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Why Warton should have been astonished is not clear. He had been a member of the Club for nearly fourteen years, and so was likely to

have met Fox and learnt that he was a scholar.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Lawrence was black-balled, and did not become a member of the Club till December, 1802. CROKER.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Joshua's niece, Miss Palmer. For the dinners which he gave, see *Life*, iii. 375 n.; iv. 312 n.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Batt, who in 1789 was one of the Commissioners for auditing the Public Accounts. Walpole's *Letters*, ix. 181 n.

When Miss Burney escaped from her Court servitude she met him at a party. "How I rejoice," he cried, "to see you at length out of thralldom!" "Thralldom?" quoth I, "that's rather a strong word!" Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, v. 270.

<sup>6</sup> Croker inserts this name, apparently to complete the thirteen, but Dr. Lawrence's brother is included in Boswell's list.

<sup>7</sup> Afterwards Lord Chancellor. *Life*, ii. 173.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Metcalfe, one of Reynolds's executors. *Ib.* iv. 159, n. 2.

<sup>9</sup> The brother of H. W. Bunbury, the caricaturist. *Ib.* ii. 274. Sir Charles was the only man of heredi-

Feb.

Feb. 10. 1791. Yours of the 5th reached me yesterday. I instantly went to the Don, who purchased for you at the office of Hazard and Co. a half, stamped by government and warranted undrawn, of No. 43 m 152. in the English State Lottery. I have marked on the back of it Edward, Henrietta, and Catherine Malone, and if Fortune will not favour those three united, I shall blame her. This half shall lie in my bureau with my own whole one, till you desire it to be placed elsewhere. The cost with registration is 8*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* A half is always proportionally dearer than a whole. I bought my ticket at Nicholson's the day before, and paid 16*l.* 8*s.* for it<sup>1</sup>. I did not look at the number, but sealed it up. In the evening a handbill was circulated by Nicholson, that a ticket the day before sold at his office for 16*l.* 8*s.* was drawn a prize for 5000*l.* The number was mentioned in the handbill. I had resolved not to know what mine was till after the drawing of the lottery was finished, that I might not receive a sudden shock of blank; but this unexpected circumstance, which elated me by calculating that mine must certainly be one of 100, or at most 200 sold by Nicholson the day before, made me look at the two last figures of it; which, alas! were 48, whereas those of the fortunate one were 33. I have remanded my ticket to its secrecy. O! could I but get a few thousands, what a difference would it make upon my state of mind, which is harassed by thinking of my debts<sup>2</sup>. I am anxious to hear your determination as

tary rank who attended Johnson's funeral. He married Lady Sarah Lennox, with whom George III had been in love. Being divorced, she married the Hon. George Napier, by whom she was the mother of Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, and Sir William Napier, the historian. Walpole's *Letters*, iii. 373 *n.* She died in 1826—a great grand-daughter of Charles II. Topham Beauclerk and Charles James Fox, both of whom Johnson called his friends, were descended from Charles II.

<sup>1</sup> In the Table of Ways and Means

for 1791 is entered on May 19, 'Profit in 50,000 lottery-tickets at £16. 2. 6 — £306,250.' *Annual Register*, 1791, Appendix, i. 116. The difference between £16. 2. 6 and £16. 8 was, I suppose, the dealer's profit. The total sum paid at this rate for the tickets was £820,000, of which little more than £500,000 was returned in prizes, while over £13,000 went to the dealers.

<sup>2</sup> I learnt on good authority at Auchinleck that Boswell left his estates nearly clear of debt, but that they became encumbered by his son, Sir Alexander, and his grand-

to



to my *magnum opus*. I am very unwilling to part with the property of it, and certainly would not, if I could but get credit for 1000*l.* for three or four years. Could you not assist me in that way, on the security of the book, and of an assignment to one half of my rents, 700*l.* which, upon my honour, are always due, and would be forthcoming in case of my decease? I will not sell, till I have your answer as to this.

On Tuesday we had a Club of eleven. Lords Lucan<sup>1</sup> (in the chair), Ossory, Macartney<sup>2</sup>, Eliot<sup>3</sup>, Bishop of Clonfert<sup>4</sup>, young Burke, myself, Courtenay, Windham, Sir Joshua, and Charles Fox, who takes to us exceedingly, and asked to have dinner a little later; so it was to be at  $\frac{1}{4}$  past five. Burke had made a great interest for his drum-major<sup>5</sup>, and, would you believe it? had not Courtenay and I been there, he would have been chosen. Banks was quite indignant, but had company at home. Lord Ossory ventured to put up the Bishop of Peterborough, and I really hope he will get in. Courtenay and I will not be there, and probably not again till you come. It was poor work last week, the whelp<sup>6</sup> would not let us hear Fox . . . I am strangely ill, and doubt if even you could dispel the demoniac

son, Sir James Boswell. The population of Auchinleck had risen, between 1834 and 1889, from 1,600 to nearly 7,000. This rapid increase was due to the coal mines which were opened about 1854, and at one time added £5,000 a year to the Boswell rental.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 326.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord Macartney (wrote Boswell in the Advertisement to the second edition of the *Life*, i. 13) favoured me with his own copy of my book, with a number of notes, of which I have availed myself. On the first leaf I found in his Lordship's hand-writing, an inscription of such high commendation, that even I, vain as I am, cannot prevail on myself to publish it.' I hope that this volume will find its way into a public library.

<sup>3</sup> It was he of whom Johnson said,

'I did not think a *young Lord* could have mentioned to me a book in the English history that was not known to me.' *Life*, iv. 333.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Marlay, once Dean of Ferns and afterwards Bishop of Waterford. *Life*, iv. 73. On Jan. 27, 1782, he wrote to Lord Charlemont:—'Our club black-balled lord Camden. This conduct should disgrace the society. The bishop of St. Asaph was once black-balled, but is now elected. The club must have some wretched members belonging to it, or the two greatest and most virtuous characters in the kingdom could not be treated with such disrespect.' *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Twelfth Report, App. x. 396.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Lawrence.

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps young Burke.

influence.

influence. I have now before me p. 488. in print: the 923 pages of the copy only is exhausted, and there remains 80, besides the death; as to which I shall be concise, though solemn; also many letters. Pray how shall I wind up? Shall I give the character in my *Tour*, somewhat enlarged<sup>1</sup>?

London, Feb. 25. 1791. I have not seen Sir Joshua I think for a fortnight. I have been worse than you can possibly imagine, or I hope ever shall be able to imagine; which no man can do without experiencing the malady. It has been for some time painful to me to be in company. I, however, am a little better, and to meet Sir Joshua to-day at dinner at Mr. Dance's<sup>2</sup>, and shall tell him that he is to have good Irish claret.

I am in a distressing perplexity how to decide as to the property of my book. You must know, that I am *certainly* informed that a certain person who delights in mischief has been *depreciating* it<sup>3</sup>, so that I fear the sale of it may be very dubious. *Two quartos* and *two guineas* sound in an alarming manner. I believe, in my present frame, I should accept even of 50*o*l.; for I suspect that were I now to talk to Robinson<sup>4</sup>, I should find him not disposed to give 1000*l*. Did he absolutely *offer* it, or did he only express himself so as that you *concluded* he would give it? The pressing circumstance is, that I *must* lay down 1000*l*. by the 1st of May, on account of the purchase of land, which my old family enthusiasm urged me to make. You, I doubt not, have full confidence in my honesty. May I then ask you if you could venture to join with me in

<sup>1</sup> In the entry of Feb. 10, 1791, I have followed the reprint of the original in Mr. A. Morrison's *Autographs*, 2nd series, i. 375.

<sup>2</sup> There were two painters of this name, George and Nathaniel. Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 260; ii. 609.

<sup>3</sup> George Steevens, no doubt.

<sup>4</sup> Malone, writing on Nov. 15, 1793, about Mr. George Robinson, who had undertaken to publish a new edition of his *Shakespeare*, says:—'He is unluckily a determined republican.

In consequence of his political phrenzy, he at this moment is apprehensive of judgment being pronounced against him by the King's Bench for selling Paine's pamphlet, and may probably be punished for his zeal in the "good old cause," as they called it in the last century, by six months imprisonment. I shall not have the smallest pity for him.' *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Thirteenth Report, App. viii. 222.

a bond for that sum, as then I would take my chance, and, as Sir Joshua says, *game* with my book? Upon my honour, your telling me that you cannot comply with what I propose will not in the least surprise me, or make any manner of difference as to my opinion of your friendship. I mean to ask Sir Joshua if he will join; for indeed I should be vexed to sell my *Magnum Opus* for a great deal less than its intrinsic value. I meant to publish on Shrove Tuesday; but if I can get out within the month of March I shall be satisfied. I have now, I think, *four* or *five* sheets to print, which will make my second volume about 575 pages. But I shall have more cancels. That *nervous* mortal W. G. H. is not satisfied with my report of some particulars *which I wrote down from his own mouth*, and is so much agitated, that Courtenay has persuaded me to allow a *new edition* of them by H. himself to be made at H.'s expense<sup>1</sup>. Besides, it has occurred to me, that when I mention a *literary fraud*, by Rolt the historian, in going to Dublin, and publishing Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination, with his own name<sup>2</sup>, I may not be able to authenticate it, as Johnson

<sup>1</sup> W. G. H. was William Gerard Hamilton. The cancel occurs at vol. ii. 396 of the first edition; vol. iv. 111 of mine; where, instead of the paragraph which now begins, 'One of Johnson's principal talents,' the following had stood:—'His friend, Mr. Hamilton, when dining at my house one day expressed this so well that I wrote down his words:—"Johnson's great excellence in maintaining the wrong side of an argument was a splendid perversion. If you could contrive it so as to have his fair opinion upon a subject, without any bias from personal prejudice, or from a wish to conquer—it was wisdom, it was justice, it was convincing, it was overpowering."'

The blank on the next page was filled by *Hamilton*. 'Mr. Hamilton,' wrote Malone, 'has all his life been distinguished for political timidity

and indecision.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 418.

On Feb. 10 Boswell wrote to Malone:—'I must have a cancelled leaf in vol. ii. [p. 302] of that passage where there is a conversation as to conjugal infidelity on the husband's side, and his wife saying she did not care how many women he went to, if he loved her alone, with my proposing to mark in a pocket-book, every time a wife refuses, &c., &c. I wonder how you and I admitted this to the public eye, for Windham, &c. were struck with its indelicacy, and it might hurt the book much. It is however mighty good stuff.'

The passage occurs in vol. iii. p. 406 of my edition, where Johnson says:—'Wise married women don't trouble themselves about the infidelity in their husbands.'

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 359. No change was made; 'literary fraud' remains in the text.

is dead, and he may have relations who may take it up as an offence, perhaps a *libel*<sup>1</sup>. Courtenay suggests, that you may perhaps get intelligence whether it was *true*. The Bishop of Dromore<sup>2</sup> can probably tell, as he knows a great deal about Rolt. In case of doubt, should I not cancel the leaf, and either omit the curious anecdote or give it as a story which Johnson laughingly told as having circulated?

March 8. I have before me your *volunteer* letter of February 24th, and one of 5th current, which, if you have dated it right, has come with wonderful expedition. You may be perfectly sure that I have not the smallest fault to find with your disinclination to come again under any pecuniary engagements for others, after having suffered so much. Dilly proposes that he and Baldwin<sup>3</sup> should each advance 200*l.* on the credit of my book; and if they do so, I shall manage well enough, for I now find I can have 600*l.* in Scotland on the credit of my rents; and thus I shall get the 1000*l.* paid in May.

<sup>1</sup> See *Life*, iii. 15 for the agitation of 'the question, whether legal redress could be obtained, even when a man's deceased relation was calumniated in a publication.' Johnson said, 'the law does not regard that uneasiness which a man feels on having his ancestor calumniated.'

Boswell, in a note on this, says:— 'It is held in the books, that an attack on the reputation even of a dead man may be punished as a libel, because tending to a breach of the peace. There is, however, I believe, no modern decided case to that effect.'

'Chief Justice Mansfield laid down for law that satires even on dead kings were punishable.' Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, iii. 153. See also his *Letters*, viii. 533. Blackstone makes no mention of libels on the dead.

Antony à Wood was expelled from

the University of Oxford, and fined £34, for libelling the memory of the first Earl of Clarendon. With this fine the statues at the entrance of the Physic Garden were set up. Bliss's *Antony à Wood*, pp. 381-2.

A friend of mine travelling lately in the East of Europe, found that a number of a Vienna newspaper was confiscated, as it contained an attack on Maria Theresa, who, like Socrates, 'has been dead a hundred years ago.'

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Percy.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell, in the 'Advertisement to the Second Edition,' says:— 'May I be permitted to say that the typography of both editions does honour to the press of Mr. Henry Baldwin, now Master of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, whom I have long known as a worthy man and an obliging friend.' *Life*, i. 10.

You would observe some stupid lines on Mr. Burke in the 'Oracle' by Mr. Boswell! I instantly wrote to Mr. Burke, expressing my indignation at such impertinence, and had next morning a most obliging answer. Sir William Scott told me I could have no legal redress. So I went *civilly* to Bell, and he promised to mention *handsomely* that *James Boswell, Esq.* was not the author of the lines<sup>1</sup>. The note, however, on the subject was a second impertinence. But I can do nothing. I wish Fox, in his bill upon libels<sup>2</sup>, would make a heavy penalty the consequence of forging any person's name to any composition, which, in reality, such a trick amounts to.

In the night between the last of February and first of this month, I had a sudden relief from the inexplicable disorder, which occasionally clouds my mind and makes me miserable<sup>3</sup>, and it is amazing how well I have been since. Your friendly admonition as to excess in wine *has* been often too applicable; but upon this late occasion I erred on the other side. However, as I am now free from my restriction to Courtenay<sup>4</sup>, I shall be much upon my guard; for, to tell the truth, I did go too deep the day before yesterday; having dined with Michael Angelo Taylor<sup>5</sup>, and then supped at the London Tavern with the stewards of the Humane Society, and continued till I know not what hour in the morning. John Nichols was joyous to a pitch of bacchanalian vivacity. I am to dine with him next Monday; an excellent city party, Alderman Curtis, Deputy Birch<sup>6</sup>, &c. &c. I rated him gently on his saying so little of your Shakespeare<sup>7</sup>. He is ready to receive more ample notice. You may

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 190, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> On Feb. 21 Fox had given notice that he intended to bring before the House 'the conduct of the Court of King's Bench in giving judgment and sentence upon libels.' *Parl. Hist.* xxviii. 1261.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 343; iii. 421.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, ii. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Miss Burney complained to Windham that her father and M. A. Taylor 'had been most impertinently coupled' in the *Probationary Odes*

[ed. 1799, p. 247. See also *ib.* p. 295]. Windham replied: — 'Mr. Taylor is fair game enough, and likes that or any other way whatever of obtaining notice.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, iv. 139.

<sup>6</sup> 'Every Alderman has his Deputy, chosen out of the Common Council, and in some of the wards that are very large the Alderman has two Deputies.' Dodsley's *London*, i. 147.

<sup>7</sup> In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, of which Nichols was editor.

depend

depend on your having whatever reviews that mention you sent directly. Have I told you that Murphy has written An Essay on the Life and Writings of Dr. Johnson, to be prefixed to the new edition of his works? He wrote it in a month, and has received 200*l.* for it<sup>1</sup>. I am quite resolved now to keep the property of my *Magnum Opus*; and I flatter myself I shall not repent it.

My title, as we settled it, is 'The Life of Samuel Johnson, L.L.D., comprehending an account of his studies and various works, in chronological order, his conversations with many eminent persons, a series of his letters to celebrated men, and several original pieces of his composition: the whole exhibiting a view of literature and literary men in Great Britain, for near half a century, during which he flourished\*.' It will be very kind if you will suggest what yet occurs. I hoped to have published to-day; but it will be about a month yet before I launch.

March 12. Being the depositary of your chance in the lottery, I am under the disagreeable necessity of communicating the bad news that it has been drawn a *blank*. I am very sorry, both on your account and that of your sisters, and my own; for had your share of good fortune been 3166*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* I should have hoped for a loan to accommodate me. As it is, I shall, as I wrote to you, be enabled to weather my difficulties for some time: but I am still in great anxiety about the sale of my book, I find so many people shake their heads at the *two quartos* and *two guineas*. Courtenay is clear that I should sound Robinson, and accept of a thousand guineas, if he will give that sum. Meantime, the title-page must be made as good as may be. It appears to me that mentioning his studies, works, conversations, and letters is not sufficient; and I would suggest comprehending an account, in chronological order, of his studies, works, friendships, acquaintance, and other particulars; his conversation with eminent men; a series of his letters to various persons; also several original pieces of his composition never before published.

<sup>1</sup> He received £300 for it. Nichols, *Lit. Anec.*, ix. 159.

<sup>2</sup> This title Boswell somewhat modified.

The whole, &c. You will, probably, be able to assist me in expressing my idea, and arranging the parts. In the advertisement I intend to mention the letter to Lord Chesterfield, and perhaps the interview with the King, and the names of the correspondents in alphabetical order<sup>1</sup>. How should *chronological order* stand in the order of the members of my title? I had at first '*celebrated correspondents*,' which I don't like. How would it do to say 'his conversations and epistolary correspondence with eminent (or celebrated) persons?' Shall it be '*different works*,' and '*various particulars*'? In short, it is difficult to decide.

Courtenay was with me this morning. What a mystery is his going on at all! Yet he looks well, talks well, dresses well, keeps his mare—in short is in all respects like a parliament man. Do you know that my bad spirits are returned upon me to a certain degree; and such is the sickly fondness for change of place, and imagination of relief, that I sometimes think you are happier by being in Dublin, than one is in this great metropolis, where hardly any man cares for another. I am persuaded I should relish your Irish dinners very much. I have at last got chambers in the Temple, in the very staircase where Johnson lived<sup>2</sup>; and when my *Magnum Opus* is fairly launched, there shall I make a trial<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The advertisement is the preface. In it he does not make this mention.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, i. 90, n. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell wrote to Temple on April 6:—'My *Life of Johnson* is at last drawing to a close. I am correcting the last sheet, and have only to write an advertisement, to make out a note of Errata, and to correct a second sheet of Contents, one being done. I am at present in such bad spirits that I have every fear concerning it,—that I may get no

profit, nay, may lose,—that the Public may be disappointed, and think that I have done it poorly,—that I may make many enemies, and even have quarrels. Yet perhaps the very reverse of all this may happen.' *Letters to Temple*, p. 335.

On Aug. 22 he wrote:—'My *magnum opus* sells wonderfully; twelve hundred are now gone, and we hope the whole seventeen hundred may be gone before Christmas.' *Ib.* p. 342.

## ANECDOTES

BY THE

REV. DR. THOMAS CAMPBELL<sup>1</sup>

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MARCH 11th [1775]. It rained incessantly from the hour I awoke, that is, eight, till near twelve, that I went to bed, and how much further that night, I know not. This day I dined with the Club at the British Coffee [house]<sup>2</sup>, introduced by my old College friend Day. The President was a Scotch Member of Parliament, Mayne, and the prevalent interest Scottish. They did nothing but praise Macpherson's new history<sup>3</sup>, and decry Johnson and Burke. Day humorously gave money to the waiter, to bring him Johnson's *Taxation no Tyranny*. One of them desired him to save himself the expense, for that he should have it from him, and glad that he would take it away, as it was worse than nothing. Another said it was written in Johnson's manner, but worse than usual, for that there was nothing new in it.

<sup>1</sup> From *A Diary of a Visit to England in 1775. By an Irishman* (The Reverend Dr. Thomas Campbell), with Notes by Samuel Raymond, M.A., Prothonotary of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Sydney: Waugh & Cox, 1854. For the question of the authenticity of this Diary see *Life*, ii. 338, n. 2. 'In a marginal note Mrs. Thrale says of Dr. Campbell: "He was a fine showy talking man, Johnson liked him of all things in a year or two."' Hayward's *Pious*, 2nd ed., i. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, ii. 195; iv. 179, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 'The History of Great Britain from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover. 2 vols. quarto, £2. 2s.' *Gent. Mag.* 1775, p. 192. Hume, writing to Strahan, described it as 'one of the most wretched Productions that ever came from your Press.' *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. 308. 'For Macpherson,' wrote Horace Walpole, 'I stopped dead short in the first volume; never was such a heap of insignificant trash and lies.' Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 202.



14th. The first entire fair day, since I came to London. This day I called at Mr. Thrale's, where I was received with all respect by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. She is a very learned lady<sup>1</sup>, and joyns to the charms of her own sex, the manly understanding of ours. The immensity of the Brewery astonished me. One large house contains, and cannot contain more, only four store vessels, each of which contains fifteen hundred barrels; and in one of which one hundred persons have dined with ease<sup>2</sup>. There are besides in other houses, thirty six of the same construction, but of one half the contents.

15th. A fair day. Dined with Archdeacon Congreve, to whom Dr. S. Johnson was schoolfellow at Litchfield<sup>3</sup>. The Doctor had visited the Archdeacon yesterday, by which accident I learned this circumstance.

16th. A fair day. Dined with Mr. Thrale along with Dr. Johnson, and Baretti. Baretti is a plain sensible man, who seems to know the world well. He talked to me of the invitation given him by the College of Dublin, but said it (one hundred pounds a year, and rooms,) was not worth his acceptance; and if it had been, he said, in point of profit, still he would not have accepted it, for that now he could not live out of London. He had returned a few years ago to his own country<sup>4</sup>, but he could not enjoy it; and he was obliged to return to London, to those connections he had been making for near thirty years past. He told me he had several families, with whom, both in town and country, he could go at any time, and spend a month: he is at this time on these terms at Mr. Thrale's, and he knows how to keep his ground. Talking as we were at tea of the magnitude of the beer vessels, he said there was one thing in Mr. Thrale's house, still more extraordinary; meaning his wife. She gulped

<sup>1</sup> 'Her learning,' said Johnson, 'is that of a school-boy in one of the lower forms.' *Life*, i. 494.

<sup>2</sup> 'Here is Thrale has a thousand tun of copper (said Johnson to Reynolds); you may paint it all round if you will, I suppose; it will serve

him to brew in afterwards.' *Ante*, i. 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 45. Johnson described him as 'a very pious man, but always muddy.' *Ib.* ii. 460. See also *ib.* ii. 474; *Letters*, i. 304, 378, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 361.

the pill very prettily—so much for Baretto<sup>1</sup>! Johnson, you are the very man Lord Chesterfield describes:—a Hottentot indeed<sup>2</sup>, and tho' your abilities are respectable, you never can be respected yourself. He has the aspect of an Idiot, without the faintest ray of sense gleaming from any one feature—with the most awkward garb, and unpowdered grey wig, on one side only of his head—he is for ever dancing the devil's jig, and sometimes he makes the most driveling effort to whistle some thought in his absent paroxysms<sup>3</sup>. He came up to me and took me by the hand, then sat down on a sofa, and mumbled out that he had heard two papers had appeared against him in the course of this week—one of which was—that he was to go to Ireland next summer in order to abuse the hospitality of that place also<sup>4</sup>. His awkwardness at table is just what Chesterfield described, and his roughness of manners kept pace with that. When Mrs. Thrale quoted something from Foster's Sermons, he flew in a passion and said that Foster was a man of mean ability, and of no original thinking<sup>5</sup>. All which tho' I took to be most true, yet I held it not meet to have it so set down. He said that he looked upon Burke to be the author of Junius, and that though he would not take him *contra mundum*, yet he would take him against any man<sup>6</sup>. Baretto was of the same mind,

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Thrale thus ends some lines she wrote on Baretto:—

'While tenderness, temper and truth he despises,  
And only the triumph of victory prizes,  
Yet let us be candid, and where shall we find  
So active, so able, so ardent a mind?  
To your children more soft, more polite with your servant,  
More firm in distress, or in friendship more fervent?'

Hayward's *Piossi*, 2nd ed. ii. 177.

<sup>2</sup> It was not Johnson that Chesterfield described. *Ante*, i. 384, 451; *Life*, i. 267, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iii. 357.

<sup>4</sup> He was charged with having abused the hospitality of the Scotch in his *Journey to the Western Islands* just published. *Life*, ii. 305. Of Ireland he said:—'It is the last place where I should wish to travel . . . Yet he had a kindness for the Irish nation.' *Ib.* iii. 410.

<sup>5</sup> 'Mr. Beauclerk one day repeated to Dr. Johnson Pope's lines,  
"Let modest Foster, if he will, excel  
Ten metropolitans in preaching well";

then asked the Doctor, "Why did Pope say this?" JOHNSON. "Sir, he hoped it would vex somebody." *Ib.* iv. 9.

<sup>6</sup> 'JOHNSON. "I should have been tho'

tho' he mentioned a fact which made against the opinion, which was that a paper having appeared against Junius, on this day, a Junius came out in answer to that the very next, when (every body knew) Burke was in Yorkshire. But all the Juniuses were evidently not written by the same hand. Burke's brother is a good writer, tho' nothing like Edward [*sic*]. The Doctor as he drinks no wine, retired soon after dinner, and Baretti, who I see is a sort of literary toad-eater to Johnson, told me that he was a man nowise affected by praise or dispraise<sup>1</sup>, and that the journey to the Hebrides would never have been published but for himself. The Doctor however returned again, and with all the fond anxiety of an author, I saw him cast out all his nets to know the sense of the town about his last pamphlet, *Taxation no Tyranny*, which he said did not sell<sup>2</sup>. Mr. Thrale told him such and such members of both houses admired it, and why did you not tell me this, quoth Johnson<sup>3</sup>. Thrale asked him what Sir Joshua Reynolds said of it. Sir Joshua, quoth the Doctor, has not read it. I suppose, quoth Thrale, he has been very busy of late; no, says the Doctor, but I never look at his pictures, so he won't read my writings. Was this like a man insensible to glory! Thrale then asked him if he had got Miss Reynolds' opinion, for she it seems is a politician; as to that, quoth the Doctor, it is no great matter, for she could not tell after she had read it, on which side of the question Mr. Burke's speech was. N.B.—We had a great deal of conversation about Archdeacon Congreve, who was his class-fellow at Litchfield School. He talked of him as a man of great coldness of mind, who could be two years in London without letting him know it till a few weeks ago, and then apologising by saying, that he did not know where to enquire for him<sup>4</sup>. This plainly raised his

lieved Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters; but Burke spontaneously denied it to me." *Life*, iii. 376. See *ante*, i. 172.

<sup>1</sup> 'He loved praise when it was brought to him; but was too proud to seek for it. He was somewhat susceptible of flattery.' *Life*, iv. 427.

<sup>2</sup> On April 2, 'his *Taxation no Tyranny* being mentioned, he said, "I think I have not been attacked enough for it." *Ib.* ii. 335. Six days later he wrote:—"The patriots pelt me with answers." *Letters*, i. 314.

<sup>3</sup> See *Life*, iv. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson wrote to Dr. Taylor on Dec. 22, 1774:—"How long Charles indignation

indignation, for he swelled to think that his celebrity should not be notorious to every porter in the street. The Archdeacon, he told me, has a sermon upon the nature of moral good and evil, preparing for the press, and should he die before publication, he leaves fifty pounds for that purpose. He said he read some of it to him, but that as he had interrupted him to make some remarks, he hopes never to be troubled with another rehearsal<sup>1</sup>.

25th. Eddying winds in the forenoon rendered the streets very disagreeable with dust, which was laid in the evening by rain from three. Dined at Mr. Thrale's, where there were ten or more gentlemen, and but one lady besides Mrs. Thrale. The dinner was excellent<sup>2</sup>: first course, soups at head and foot removed by fish and a saddle of mutton; second course, a fowl they call Galena at head, and a capon larger than some of our Irish turkeys at foot; third course, four different sorts of Ices, Pineapple, Grape, Raspberry and a fourth; in each remove, there were I think fourteen dishes. The two first courses were served in massy plate. I sat beside Baretti, which was to me the richest part of the entertainment. He and Mr. and Mrs. Thrale joyn'd in expressing to me Dr. Johnson's concern that he could not give me the meeting that day, but desired that I should go and see him. Baretti was very humourous about his new publication<sup>3</sup>, which he expects to put out next month. He there introduces a dialogue about Ossian, wherein he ridicules the idea of its double translation into Italian, in hopes, he said, of having it abused by the Scots, which would give it an imprimatur for a second edition, and he had stipulated for twenty five guineas additional if the first should sell in a given time. He repeated to me upon memory the substance of the letters which passed between Dr. Johnson and Mr. McPherson. The latter tells the Doctor, that neither his age nor infirmity's should protect him if he came in his way. The Doctor responds that

Congreve has been here, I know not. He told me he knew not how to find me.' *Letters*, i. 304.

<sup>1</sup> 'He is going to print a sermon, but I thought he appeared neither very acute nor very knowing.'

*Letters*, i. 304. The sermon probably was not published; it is not in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 423, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* ii. 449.

no menaces of any rascal should intimidate him from detecting imposture wherever he met it<sup>1</sup>.

APRIL 1st. A fair day, dined at Mr. Thrale's, whom in proof of the magnitude of London, I cannot help remarking, no coachman, and this is the third I have called, could find without enquiry<sup>2</sup>. But of this by the way. There was Murphy, Boswell, and Baretti, the two last, as I learned just before I entered, are mortal foes, so much so that Murphy and Mrs. Thrale agreed that Boswell expressed a desire that Baretti should be hanged upon that unfortunate affair of his killing, &c.<sup>3</sup> Upon this hint I went, and without any sagacity it was easily discernable, for upon Baretti's entering, Boswell did not rise, and upon Baretti's descry of Boswell, he grinned a perturbed glance. Politeness however smooths the most hostile brows, and theirs were smoothed. Johnson was the subject, both before and after dinner, for it was the boast of all but myself, that under that roof were the Doctor's first friends. His bon mots were retailed in such plenty, that they, like a surfeit, could not lye upon my memory. Boswell arguing in favour of a cheerful glass, adduced the maxim *in vino veritas*, 'well,' says Johnson, 'and what then unless a man has lived a lye<sup>4</sup>.' B. then urged that it made a man forget all his cares, 'that, to be sure' says Johnson 'might be of use if a man sat by such a person as you<sup>5</sup>.' Boswell confessed that he liked a glass of whiskey in the Highland tour, and used to take it; at length says Johnson, 'let me try wherein the pleasure of a Scotsman consists,' and so tips off a brimmer of whiskey<sup>6</sup>. But Johnson's abstemiousness is new to him, for within a few years he would swallow two bottles of Port

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, ii. 298.

<sup>2</sup> His town-house was in the Borough, on the southern side of the Thames.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell coldly describes him as 'an Italian of considerable literature.' *Life*, i. 302. He most likely was 'the foreign friend of Johnson's, so wretchedly perverted to infidelity that he treated the hopes of immortality with a brutal levity.' *Ib.* ii. 8. He also was the 'Italian of

some note in London' who wondered who was the author of the *Pater Noster*. *Ib.* v. 121. Boswell's account of his trial for murder is not such an account as a friend would have written. *Ib.* ii. 97.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* ii. 188; *ante*, i. 321.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, ii. 193.

<sup>6</sup> 'Come (said he) let me know what it is that makes a Scotchman happy.' *Ib.* v. 346.

without

without any apparent alteration, and once in the company with whom I dined this day, he said, pray Mr. Thrale give us another bottle<sup>1</sup>. It is ridiculous to pry so nearly into the movements of such men, yet Boswell carries it to a degree of superstition. The Doctor it appears has a custom of putting the peel of oranges into his pocket, and he asked the Doctor what use he made of them, the Doctor's reply was, that his dearest friend should not know that<sup>2</sup>. This has made poor Boswell unhappy, and I verily think he is as anxious to know the secret as a green sick girl. N.B. The book wherewith Johnson presented the highland lady was Cocker's Arithmetic<sup>3</sup>.

Murphy gave it (on Garrick's authority) that when it was asked what was the greatest pleasure, Johnson answered \*\* But Garrick is his most intimate friend, they came to London together and he<sup>4</sup> is very correct both in his conduct and language; as a proof of this, they all agreed in a story of him and Dr. James<sup>5</sup>, who is, it seems, a very lewd fellow, both *verbo et facto*. James, it seems, in a coach with his whoor, took up Johnson, and set him down at a given place Johnson hearing afterwards what the lady was attacked James, when next he met him, for carrying him about in such company. James apologised by saying \*\*. 'Damn the rascal<sup>6</sup>,' says Johnson, 'he is past sixty the \*.'

Boswell desirous of setting his native country off to the best advantage expatiated upon the beauty of a certain prospect, particularly upon a view of the sea. 'O Sir,' says Johnson, 'the sea is the same everywhere<sup>7</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup>. 'Talking of drinking wine Johnson said, "I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this."' *Life*, iii. 245.

<sup>2</sup> It was on the morning of this same day that Boswell received this reply. *Ib.* ii. 330. See also *Letters*, i. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, v. 138.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, not Garrick, is meant.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* i. 81, 159; iii. 389, n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> These words, we may be sure,

were neither uttered by Johnson, nor reported of him at a table where his aversion to profanity was known; nor is it at all likely that he uttered anything which the editor of Dr. Campbell's *Diary* could not have printed. Reynolds, who knew him so well, said that 'he would never suffer the least immorality or indecency of conversation to proceed without a severe check.' *Post* in Sir J. Reynolds's *Anecdotes*; *ante*, ii. 17.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, v. 54.

Johnson, in a letter as printed by Mrs. Piozzi, wrote:—'I am glad that  
Dr.

Dr. Johnson calls the act in *Bragansa*<sup>1</sup> with the monk, paralytick on one side; *i.e.* the monk is introduced without any notification of his character, so that any monk, or any other person might as well be introduced in the same place, and for the same purpose. And I myself say, that Velasquez quitting his hold of the Dutchess, upon sight of the monk, is an effect without a sufficient cause. The cool, intrepid character of Velasquez required that he should either have dispatched, or attempted to dispatch the monk, and then there would have been a pretext for losing hold of the Dutchess. The Duke is a poor, tame animal, and by no means equal to his historic character. A whimsical incident I was witness to there. Murphy told a very comical story of a Scotchman's interview with Dr. Johnson, upon his earnest desire of being known to the Doctor. This was Boswell himself<sup>2</sup>. N.B. *The Tour to the Western Isles* was written in twenty days<sup>3</sup>, and the *Patriot* in three<sup>4</sup>. *Taxation no Tyranny* within a week<sup>5</sup>, and not one of them would have yet seen the light, had it not been for Mrs. Thrale and Baretti, who stirred him up by laying wagers<sup>6</sup>.

the ladies find so much novelty at Weymouth. Ovid says that the sun is undelightfully uniform.' I conjectured in a note that he wrote not *sun* but *sea*. *Letters*, ii. 325. I could not however find the reference to Ovid. I have no doubt however that he was referring to the line which he quoted to Boswell at Leith:—

'Una est injusti caerula forma maris.'

Ovid, *Amor.* L. ii. El. xi.

<sup>1</sup> A tragedy by Robert Jephson, acted at Drury Lane 1775. *Post*, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 428.

<sup>3</sup> He 'conceived the thought of it' on Sept. 1, 1773. *Life*, v. 141. For part of his material he used his letters to Mrs. Thrale. In the following winter he was collecting information. *Ib.* ii. 269, 271. In March he wrote to Boswell:—'I think I shall be very

diligent next week about our travels, which I have too long neglected.' *Ib.* ii. 277. On June 20 he 'put the first sheets to the press.' *Ib.* p. 278. On July 4 he had still two sheets to write. *Ib.* p. 288. Owing to the delay of the printer the last sheet was not corrected till Nov. 25. *Ib.* p. 288.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Patriot' was called for by my political friends on Friday, was written on Saturday.' *Ib.* ii. 288.

<sup>5</sup> On Jan. 21, 1775, he wrote to Boswell:—'I am going to write about the Americans.' *Ib.* ii. 292. On Feb. 3 he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'My pamphlet has not gone on at all.' *Letters*, i. 308. By March 1 it had been not only written, but altered by some one in the Ministry. *Ib.* i. 309. 'The False Alarm' was written between eight o'clock on Wednesday night and twelve o'clock on Thursday night.' *Ante*, i. 173.

<sup>6</sup> According to Hawkins, 'it was

APRIL

APRIL 5th. Dined with Dilly in the Poultry<sup>1</sup>, as guest to Mr. Boswell, where I met Dr. Johnson, (and a Mr. Miller, who lives near Bath<sup>2</sup>, who is a dilletanti man, keeps a weekly day for the Litterati, and is himself so litterate, that he gathereth all the flowers that ladies write, and bindeth into a garland, but enough of him) with several others, particularly a Mr. Scott<sup>3</sup>, who seems to be a very sensible plain man. The Doctor, when I came in, had an answer titled *Taxation and Tyranny* to his last pamphlet, in his hand. He laughed at it, and said he would read no more of it, for that it paid him compliments, but gave him no information. He asked if there were any more of them. I told him I had seen another, and that the *Monthly Review* had handled it in what I believed he called the way of information. 'Well,' says he, 'I should be glad to see it.' Then Boswell (who understands his temper well<sup>4</sup>) asked him somewhat, for I was not attending, relative to the Provincial Assemblies<sup>5</sup>. The Doctor, in process of discourse with him, argued with great vehemence that the Assemblies were nothing more than our Vestries. I asked him, was there not this difference, that an Act of the Assemblies required the King's assent to pass into a law: his answer had more of wit than of argument. 'Well Sir,' says he, 'that only gives it more weight.' I thought I had gone too far, but dinner was then announced, and Dilly, who paid all attention to him, in placing him next to the fire, said, 'Doctor, perhaps you will be too warm<sup>6</sup>.' 'No Sir,' says the Doctor, 'I am neither hot

by a wager, or some other pecuniary engagement' that he was moved to finish his *Shakespeare*. *Life*, i. 319, n. 4.

<sup>1</sup> At Dilly's table 'Johnson, who boasted of the niceness of his palate, owned that "he always found a good dinner."' *Life*, iii. 285. For this particular dinner see *ib.* ii. 338.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* ii. 336.

<sup>3</sup> John Scott of Amwell, the Quaker poet. *ib.* ii. 338, 351.

<sup>4</sup> See *ib.* iii. 39, where Boswell asked him a question 'with an assumed air of ignorance, to incite him

to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address.'

<sup>5</sup> The assemblies of the thirteen American colonies.

<sup>6</sup> 'Johnson told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that once when he dined in a numerous company of booksellers, where, the room being small, the head of the table at which he sat was almost close to the fire, he persevered in suffering a great deal of inconvenience from the heat, rather than quit his place, and let one of them sit above him.' *ib.* iii. 311.

nor



nor cold.' 'And yet,' said I 'Doctor, you are not a lukewarm man.' This I thought pleased him, and as I sat next him, I had a fine opportunity of attending to his phiz; and I could clearly see he was fond of having his quaint things laughed at, and they (without any force) gratified my propensity to affuse grinning. Mr. Dilly led him to give his opinion of men and things, of which he is very free, and Dilly will probably retail them all. Talking of the Scotch, (after Boswell was gone) he said, though they were not a learned nation, yet they were far removed from ignorance. Learning was new among them, and he doubted not but they would in time be a learned people, for they were a fine, bold enterprising people. He compared England and Scotland to two lions, the one saturated with his belly full, and the other prowling for prey. But the test he offered to prove that Scotland, tho' it had learning enough for common life, yet had not sufficient for the dignity of literature, was, that he defied any one to produce a classical book, written in Scotland since Buchanan<sup>1</sup>. Robertson, he said, used pretty words, but he liked Hume better<sup>2</sup>, and neither of them would he allow to be more to Clarendon<sup>3</sup>, than a rat to a cat. 'A Scotch surgeon,' says he 'may have more learning than an English one, and all Scotland could not muster learning enough for Louth's prelections<sup>4</sup>.' Turning to me, he said, 'you have produced classical writers and scholars; I don't know,' says he, 'that any man is before Usher<sup>5</sup>, as a scholar, unless it may be Seldon [*sic*], and you have a philosopher, Boyle, and you have Swift and Congreve, but the latter,' says he, 'denied you<sup>6</sup>'; and he might have added the former too<sup>7</sup>. He then said, you

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 5, 15.

<sup>2</sup> In 1773 Johnson said:—'I have not read Hume.' *Life*, ii. 236; *ante*, ii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> 'Clarendon (said Johnson) is supported by his matter. It is indeed owing to a plethora of matter that his style is so faulty.' *Life*, iii. 258.

<sup>4</sup> For Lowth see *ib.* ii. 37.

<sup>5</sup> 'Usher (Johnson said) was the great luminary of the Irish church;

and a greater, he added, no church could boast of, at least in modern times.' *ib.* ii. 132.

<sup>6</sup> 'Southern mentioned Congreve with sharp censure as a man that meanly disowned his native country.' *Works*, viii. 23.

<sup>7</sup> 'Swift was contented to be called an Irishman by the Irish, but would occasionally call himself an Englishman.' *ib.* viii. 192.

certainly

certainly have a turn for the drama, for you have Southerne and Farquhar and Congreve<sup>1</sup>, and many living authors and players. Encouraged by this, I went back to assert the genius of Ireland in old times, and ventured to say that the first professors of Oxford and Paris, &c., were Irish. 'Sir,' says he, 'I believe there is something in what you say<sup>2</sup>'; and I am content with it, *since they are not Scotch*<sup>3</sup>.'

APRIL 8th. Very cold, and some rain, but not enough to allay the blowing of the dust. Dined with Thrale<sup>4</sup>, where Dr. Johnson was, and Boswell, (and Baretti as usual.) The Doctor was not in as good spirits as he was at Dilly's. He had supped the night before with Lady — Miss Jeffry's, one of the maids of honour, Sir Joshua Reynolds, &c., at Mrs. Abington's<sup>5</sup>. He said Sir C. Thompson, and some others who were there, spoke like people who had seen good company, and so did Mrs. Abington herself, who could not have seen good company<sup>6</sup>. He seems fond of Boswell, and yet he is always abusing the Scots before him, by way of joke<sup>7</sup>: talking of their nationality, he said they were not singular: the Negroes and Jews being so too. Boswell lamented there was no good map of Scotland. 'There never can be a good (map) of Scotland,' says the Doctor sententiously. This excited Boswell to ask wherefore. 'Why Sir, to measure land, a man must go over it; but who could think of going over Scotland<sup>8</sup>.' When Dr. Goldsmith was mentioned, and Dr. Percy's intention of writing his life<sup>9</sup>, he expressed his approbation strongly, adding that Goldsmith was the best writer he ever knew, upon every

<sup>1</sup> He passes over Goldsmith.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson described Ireland as having once been 'the school of the west, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature.' *Life*, iii. 112.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Irish (he said) have not that extreme nationality which we find in the Scotch.' *Ib.* ii. 242.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* ii. 349.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* On March 27 he had gone with 'a body of wits' to her benefit. *Ib.* ii. 324. On May 12 he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'Yesterday I had I

know not how much kiss of Mrs. Abington, and very good looks from Miss —, the maid of honour.' *Letters*, i. 316.

<sup>6</sup> Northcote described her as 'the Grosvenor Square of Comedy.' *Conversations of Northcote*, p. 298.

<sup>7</sup> Boswell describes 'the good-humoured pleasantry with which he played off his wit against Scotland.' *Life*, ii. 77.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* ii. 356.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.* iii. 100, n. 1.

subject he wrote upon<sup>1</sup>. He said that Kendric<sup>2</sup> had borrowed all his dictionary from him. 'Why,' says Boswell, 'every man who writes a dictionary must borrow.' 'No Sir,' says Johnson, 'that is not necessary.' 'Why,' says Boswell, 'have not you a great deal in common with those who wrote before you,' 'Yes Sir,' says Johnson, 'I have the words, but my business was not to make words but to explain them.' Talking of Garrick and Barry<sup>3</sup>, he said he always abused Garrick himself, but when anybody else did so, he fought for the dog like a tiger<sup>4</sup>; as to Barry, he said he supposed he could not read. 'And how does he get his part?' says one. 'Why, somebody reads it to him, and yet I know,' says he, 'that he is very much admired.' Mrs. Thrale then took him by repeating a repartee of Murphy, the setting Barry up in competition with Garrick, is what irritates the English Criticks, and Murphy standing up for Barry. Johnson said that he was fit for nothing but to stand at an auction room door with his pole. Murphy said that Garrick would do the business as well, and pick the people's pockets at the same time. Johnson admitted the fact, but said, Murphy spoke nonsense, for that people's pockets were not picked at the door, but in the room<sup>5</sup>; then said I, he was worse than the pick-pockets, forasmuch as he was Pandar to them; this went off with a laugh. *Vive la bagatelle*<sup>6</sup>. It was a case decided here, that there was no harm, and much pleasure in laughing at our absent friends, and I own, if the character is not damaged, I can see no injury done.

APRIL 9th. A fair day, went to St. Clements to hear Mr. Burrows<sup>7</sup>, so cried up by Lord Dartrey<sup>8</sup>, preach, but I was wofully disappointed; his matter is cold, his manner hot, his voice weak, and his action affected. Indeed I thought he

<sup>1</sup> 'JOHNSON. "Whether indeed we take Goldsmith as a poet, as a comick writer, or as an historian, he stands in the first class."' *Life*, ii. 236.

<sup>2</sup> William Kenrick. *Ib.* i. 497; ii. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Spranger Barry, the actor.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* i. 397, n. 1; iii. 70, 312.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* ii. 349.

<sup>6</sup> Swift's 'favourite maxim.' *Works*, viii. 217.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, iii. 379.

<sup>8</sup> Dartrey, Lord. Thomas Dawson, created a peer of Ireland, May 28, 1770, as Baron Dartrey, of Dawson's Grove, and also Viscount Cremorne, June, 1785. B. 1725; d. 1813.

preached

preached from a printed book, a book it certainly was, and it seemed at my distance, which was the perpendicular to the side of the pulpit, to have a broad margin-like print, and he did not seem master of it, yet he affected much emphasis and action. Dined with Mr. Combe, and spent the evening with Dr. Campbell<sup>1</sup>.

APRIL 10th. Rain, but not enough to soften the asperity of the weather. Dined with General Oglethorpe<sup>2</sup>, who was in lieu of Aid-de-Camp, (for he had no such officer about him) to Prince Eugene, and celebrated by Mr. Pope<sup>3</sup>. Dr. Johnson pressed him to write his life; adding, that no life in Europe was so well worth recording<sup>4</sup>. The old man excused himself, saying the life of a private man was not worthy public notice. He however desired Boswell to bring him some good Almanack, that he might recollect dates, and seemed to excuse himself also on the article of incapacity, but Boswell desired him only to furnish the skeleton, and that Dr. Johnson would supply bones and sinews. 'He would be a good Doctor,' says the General, 'who would do that.' 'Well,' says I, 'he is a good Doctor,' at which he, the Doctor, laughed very heartily. Talking of America, it was observed that his works would not be admired there. 'No,' says Boswell, 'we shall soon hear of his being hung in effigy.' 'I should be glad of that,' says the Doctor, 'that would be a new source of fame;' alluding to some conversation on the fulness of his fame which had gone before. And says Boswell, 'I wonder he has not been hung in effigy from the Hebrides to England.' 'I shall suffer them to do it corporeally,' says the Doctor, 'if they can find me a tree to do it upon<sup>5</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Campbell. 'JOHNSON. "I used to go pretty often to Campbell's on a Sunday evening, till I began to consider that the shoals of Scotchmen who flocked about him might probably say, when anything of mine was well done, 'Ay, ay, he has learnt this of Cawmell.'"' *Life*, i. 418.

<sup>2</sup> It was by Boswell that Dr. Thomas Campbell was taken to

Oglethorpe's as he had been taken to Dilly's. *Ib.* ii. 350.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* i. 127; ii. 181.

<sup>4</sup> 'Dr. Johnson urged General Oglethorpe to give the world his Life. He said, "I know no man whose Life would be more interesting. If I were furnished with materials I should be very glad to write it."' *Ib.* ii. 351.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* ii. 311.

The Poem of the Graces became the topic ; Boswell asked if he had never been under the hands of a dancing master<sup>1</sup>. 'Aye, and a dancing mistress too,' says the Doctor, 'but I own to you I never took a lesson but one or two, my blind eyes showed me I could never make a proficiency.' Boswell led him to give his opinion of Gray, he said there were but two good stanzas in all his works, viz., the elegy<sup>2</sup>. Boswell desirous of eliciting his opinion upon too many subjects, as he thought, he rose up and took his hat<sup>3</sup>. This was not noticed by anybody as it was nine o'clock, but after we got into Mr. Langton's coach, who gave us a set down, he said, 'Boswell's conversation consists entirely in asking questions, and it is extremely offensive<sup>4</sup>,' we defended it upon Boswell's eagerness to hear the Doctor speak.

Talking of suicide<sup>5</sup>, Boswell took up the defence for argument's sake, and the Doctor said that some cases were more excusable than others, but if it were excusable, it should be the last resource ; 'for instance,' says he, 'if a man is distressed in circumstances, (as in the case I mentioned of Denny) he ought to fly his country.' 'How can he fly,' says Boswell, 'if he has wife and children?' 'What Sir,' says the Doctor, shaking his head as if to promote the fermentation of his wit, 'doth not a man fly from his wife and children if he murders himself?'

APRIL 16th. Dined with Archdeacon Congreve, my Lord Primate<sup>6</sup> came there in the evening. He asked me sneeringly if I had seen the lions<sup>7</sup>. I told him I had neither seen them nor the crown, nor the jewels, nor the whispering-gallery at St. Paul's. The conversation turned upon other things, and came round to his picture by Reynolds, which led on talk of Sir Joshua and other great artists, and without any force, I introduced something of Johnson. 'What,' says he, 'do you know him?' 'Yes my Lord I do, and Barretti [*sic*], and several others, whom I have been

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 79.

<sup>2</sup> This he had said to Boswell about a fortnight earlier. *Ib.* ii. 328. For two 'very good lines' in the *Bard* see *ib.* i. 403.

<sup>3</sup> 'He was not much in the humour of talking.' *Ib.* ii. 352.

<sup>4</sup> 'Questioning (said Johnson) is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen.' *Ib.* ii. 472. See also *ib.* iii. 57, 268 ; iv. 439.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* iv. 225 ; v. 54.

<sup>6</sup> The Archbishop of Armagh.

<sup>7</sup> In the Tower.

fortunate

fortunate enough to find willing to extend my acquaintance among their friends, for these, my Lord, were the lions I came to see in London.' 'Aye,' says he, 'these indeed are lions worth seeing, and the sight of them may be of use to you.'

APRIL 20th. Fair, and somewhat softened by the fall of hail yesterday. Dined at Thrale's<sup>1</sup>, with Dr. Johnson, Barretti, and a Dean Wetherall of Oxford<sup>2</sup>, who is soliciting for a riding house at Oxford. When I mentioned to the Doctor another answer, entitled *Resistance no Rebellion*, coming out, he said, 'that is the seventh, the author finds the other six will not do, and I foresee that the title is the best part of the book.' He desired that I should visit him. N.B.—Talking after dinner of the measures he would pursue with the Americans, he said the first thing he would do, would be to quarter the army on the citys, and if any refused free quarters, he would pull down that person's house, if it was joyned to other houses, but would burn it if it stood alone<sup>3</sup>. This and other schemes he proposed in the manuscript of *Taxation no Tyranny*, but these, he said, the Ministry expunged<sup>4</sup>.

24th. Rainy morning. Sat an hour with Dr. Johnson about noon. He was at breakfast with a Pindar<sup>5</sup> in his hand, and after saluting me with great cordiality, he, after whistling in his way<sup>6</sup> over Pindar, layed the book down, and then told me he had seen my Lord Primate at Sir Joshua's, and 'I believe,' says he, 'I have not recommended myself much to him, for I differed widely in opinions from him, yet I hear he is doing good things in Ireland<sup>7</sup>.' I mentioned Skelton to him as a man of strong

<sup>1</sup> Boswell was absent from London from April 19 to May 2. *Life*, ii. 371.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Wetherell was Master of University College, Oxford, and Dean of Hereford. Johnson had written to Mrs. Thrale on April 1:—'Dr. Wetherell is very desirous of seeing the brewhouse; I hope Mr. Thrale will send him an invitation.' *Letters*, i. 313. For the riding-school see *Life*, ii. 424; *Letters*, i. 309, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See *Life*, iii. 290, where he called

the Americans 'Rascals—Robbers—Pirates; exclaiming he'd burn and destroy them,' and *post*, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, ii. 313. For Hume's wise views see his *Letters to Strahan*, p. 288.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell had sent him an 'elegant Pindar.' *Life*, ii. 204.

<sup>6</sup> 'He half-whistled in his usual way when pleasant.' *Ib.* iii. 357.

<sup>7</sup> For Johnson's views about Ireland see *Life*, ii. 121, 130, 255.

imagination,

imagination, and told him the story of his selling his library for the support of the poor'. He seemed much affected by it, and then fell a rowling and muttering to himself, and I could hear him plainly say after several minutes pause from conversation, 'Skelton is a great good man.' He then said, 'I purpose reading his *Ophiomachis*, for I have never seen anything of his, but some allegoric pieces which I thought very well of.' He told me he had seen Delany when he was in every sense *gravis annis*, 'but he was [an] able man,' says he, 'his "*Revelation examined with candour*" was well received, and I have seen an introductory preface to a second edition of one of his books, which was the finest thing I ever read in the declamatory way'. He asked me whether Clayton was an English or Irish man. 'He endeavoured to raise a hissy<sup>3</sup> among you,' says he, 'but without effect I believe.' I told him one effect in the case of the parish clerks. His indignation was prodigious. 'Aye,' says he, 'these are the effects of heretical notions upon vulgar minds.'

JUNE 11th. 1781. I went to see Dr. Johnson, found him alone, Barretti came soon after. Barretti (after some pause in conversation) asked me, if the *disturbances* were over in Ireland. I told him I had not heard of any disturbances there. 'What,' says he, 'have you not been up in arms?' 'Yes, and a great number of men continue so to be.' 'And dont you call that disturbance?' returned Barretti. 'No,' said I, 'the Irish volunteers have demeaned themselves very peaceably, and instead of disturbing the peace of the country, have contributed much to its preservation'. The Doctor, who had been long silent,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Philip Skelton, born near Lisburne, 1707; died in 1787. In 1750 he obtained the living of Peltingo, in Donegal. Here, in a time of scarcity, he even sold his library to supply his indigent parishioners with bread. His works are in 7 vols. 8vo. *Universal Biography*, quoted by the editor of Campbell's *Diary*, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Delany, friend of Dr. Swift, born about 1686. In 1731 he

came to London to publish his *Revelation examined with Candour*. He died at Bath in 1768. *Ib.* p. 155. Johnson praised his *Observations on Swift*. *Life*, iii. 249.

<sup>3</sup> This word is not in Johnson's Dictionary.

<sup>4</sup> Horace Walpole thus describes public affairs in February, 1779:— 'The navy disgusted, insurrections in Scotland, Wales mutinous, a returned

turned a sharp ear to what I was saying, and with vehemence said, 'What Sir, dont you call it disturbance to oppose legal government with arms in your hands, and compel it to make laws in your favour? Sir, I call it rebellion; rebellion as much as the rebellion of Scotland.' 'Doctor,' said I, 'I am sorry to hear that fall from you, I must however say that the Irish consider themselves as the most loyal of His Majesty's subjects, at the same time that they firmly deny any allegiance to a British Parliament. They have a separate Legislature, and that they have never showed any inclination to resist.' 'Sir,' says the Doctor, 'you do owe allegiance to the British Parliament as a *conquered* nation<sup>1</sup>, and had I been Minister I would have made you submit to it. I would have done as Oliver Cromwell did; I would have burned your cities, and wasted you in the fires (or flames) of them<sup>2</sup>.' I, after allowing the Doctor to vent his indignation upon Ireland, coolly replied, 'Doctor, the times are altered, and I dont find that you have succeeded so well in burning the cities, and roasting the inhabitants of America.' 'Sir,' says he gravely, and with a less vehement tone, 'what you say is true, the times are altered, for power is now nowhere, we live under a government of influence, not of power<sup>3</sup>; but Sir, had we

bellion ready to break out in Ireland where 15,000 Protestants were in arms, without authority, for their own defence, many of them well-wishers to the Americans, and all so ruined that they insisted on relief from Parliament, or were ready to throw off subjection.' *Journal of the Reign of George III*, ii. 339.

<sup>1</sup> On May 7, 1773, 'bursting forth with a generous indignation he said, "The Irish are in a most unnatural state; for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which the Protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics. Did we tell them we have conquered them, it would be above board: to punish them by confiscation and other

penalties, as rebels, was monstrous injustice. King William was not their lawful sovereign; he had not been acknowledged by the Parliament of Ireland when they appeared in arms against him.'" *Life*, ii. 255.

<sup>2</sup> 'Johnson severely reprobated the barbarous debilitating policy of the British government [in Ireland], which, he said, was the most detestable method of persecution. To a gentleman who hinted such policy might be necessary to support the authority of the English government he replied by saying, "Let the authority of the English government perish rather than be maintained by iniquity.'" *Jb*. ii. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell, arguing with Johnson on Sept. 23, 1777, says:—"I insisted that America might be very well treated



treated the Americans as we ought, and as they deserved, we should have at once razed all their towns,—and let them enjoy their forests—.’ After this wild rant, argument would but have enraged him, I therefore let him vibrate into calmness, then turning round to me, he, with a smile, says, ‘After all Sir, though I hold the Irish to be rebels, I don’t think they have been so very wrong, but you know that you compelled our Parliament, by force of arms, to pass an act in your favour. That, I call rebellion.’ ‘But Doctor,’ said I, ‘did the Irish claim anything that ought not to have been granted, though they had not made the claim.’ ‘Sir, I won’t dispute that matter with you, but what I insist upon is that the mode of requisition was rebellious.’ ‘Well Doctor, let me ask you but one question, and I shall ask you no more on this subject, do you think that Ireland would have obtained what it has got by any other means?’ ‘Sir,’ says he candidly, ‘I believe it would not. However, a wise government should not grant even a claim of justice, if an attempt is made to extort it by force<sup>1</sup>.’ I said no more<sup>2</sup>.

governed, and made to yield sufficient revenue by the means of *influence*, as exemplified in Ireland, while the people might be pleased with the imagination of their participating of the British constitution, by having a body of representatives without whose consent money could not be extracted from them.’ *Life*, iii. 205. For *influence* see *Ib.* iii. 205, n. 4, and *Letters*, i. 107, n. 1.

When in March, 1782, Lord North’s government was overthrown, Johnson said:—‘I am glad the Ministry is removed. Such a bunch of imbecility never disgraced a country.’ *Life*, iv. 139.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson wrote on Aug. 4, 1782:—‘Perhaps no nation not absolutely conquered has declined so much in so short a time. We seem to be sinking. Suppose the Irish, having already gotten a free trade and an independent Parliament, should say

we will have a King and ally ourselves with the house of Bourbon, what could be done to hinder or to overthrow them.’ *Letters*, ii. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell published the following account of this conversation in his *Strictures on the History of Ireland*, ed. 1789, p. 336:—‘This consideration was vehemently urged against me by Dr. Johnson, in a conversation I once held with him respecting the affairs of this country (Ireland). The conversation appeared to my dear friend Dr. Wilkinson (to whom I repeated it within an hour or two after it passed) so extraordinary that he gave me pen, ink and paper to set it down immediately. But first let me premise a circumstance or two.—Having spent the winter of the year 1777 in London, I had been honoured (and it is my pride to acknowledge it) with his familiarity and friendship. I had not seen him from that time

till the 11th of June, 1781, when I went to pay him a morning visit. I found him alone, and nothing but mutual enquiries respecting mutual friends had passed, when Barretti came in. Barretti, more curious than the Doctor, soon asked me if the *Disturbances* in Ireland were over. The question, I own, surprized me, as I had left all things quiet, and was not at first altogether aware of the tendency of his question. I therefore in return asked what disturbances he meant, for that I had heard of none. "What!" said he, "have you not been in arms?" To which I answered categorically, "Yes! and manybodies of men continue so to be." "And don't you call this *Disturbance*?" rejoined Barretti. "No!" said I, "the Irish volunteers have demeaned themselves very peaceably," &c.

[Here follows a long explanation of the volunteers which I omit.]

'Dr. Johnson, who all this while sat

silent, but with a very attentive ear to what passed, at length turned to me with an apparent indignation which I had never before experienced from him.'

Here follows Johnson's speech in much the same words as in the text, except that '*wasted* in the flames' is '*roasted* in the flames.' *Wasted* probably is a misprint. Campbell continues:—'After this explosion I perhaps warmly replied' [In the text Campbell '*cooly replied*']. Johnson continues as in the text, but adds:—'in a jocular way, repeating what he before said, "when we should have roasted the Americans as rebels we only whipped them as children, and we did not succeed because my advice was not taken."' The conversation ends with his saying:—'Why, Sir, I don't know but I might have acted as you did, had I been an Irishman; but I speak as an Englishman.'

*ANECDOTES*  
*FROM PENNINGTON'S MEMOIRS OF*  
*MRS. CARTER*

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MRS. CARTER always spoke in high terms of Dr. Johnson's constant attendance to religious duties, and the soundness of his moral principles. In one of their latest conversations she was expressing this opinion of him to himself; he took her by the hand, and said with much eagerness; 'You know this to be true, and testify it to the world when I am gone.' Vol. i. p. 41.

The following epigram by Dr. Johnson, found among Mrs. Carter's poems, in his own hand-writing has never, I believe, been published before.

'Quid mihi cum cultu? Probitas inculta nitescit,  
Et juvat Ingenii vita sine arte rudis.  
Ingenium et mores si pulchra probavit Elisa,  
Quid majus mihi spes ambitiosa dabit'?

Vol. i. p. 398.

To these parties [at Mrs. Montagu's and Mrs. Vesey's] it was not difficult for any person of character to be introduced. There was no ceremony, no cards and no supper. Even dress was so little regarded, that a foreign gentleman, who was to go there with an acquaintance, was told in jest that it was so little necessary that he might appear there, if he pleased, *in blue stockings*. This he understood in the literal sense; and when he spoke of it in French called it the *Bas Bleu* meeting. And this was the origin

\* For his other epigrams to her, see *Life*, i. 122, 140, and *Works*, i. 170.

of the ludicrous appellation of the Blue Stocking Club, since given to these meetings, and so much talked of<sup>1</sup>.

Nothing could be more agreeable, nor indeed more instructive, than these parties. Mrs. Vesey<sup>2</sup> had the almost magic art of putting all her company at their ease, without the least appearance of design. Here was no formal circle to petrify an unfortunate stranger on his entrance; no rules of conversation to observe; no holding forth of one to his own distress, and the stupefying of his audience, no reading of his works by the author. The company naturally broke into little groups, perpetually varying and changing<sup>3</sup>. They talked or were silent, sat or walked about, just as they pleased. Nor was it absolutely necessary even to talk sense. There was no bar to harmless mirth and gaiety: and while perhaps Dr. Johnson in one corner held forth on the moral duties, in another, two or three young people might be talking of the fashions and the Opera; and in a third Lord Orford (then Mr. Horace Walpole) might be amusing a little group around him with his lively wit and intelligent conversation<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For another explanation of the name, see *Life*, iv. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Blue-stocking. Wearing blue worsted (instead of black silk) stockings; hence, not in full dress, in homely dress (*contemptuous*). Applied to the "Little Parliament" of 1653, with reference to the puritanically plain or mean attire of its members. Applied depreciatively to the assemblies that met at Montagu House, and those who frequented them or imitated them. Hence of women: Having or affecting literary tastes. Transferred sneeringly to any woman showing a taste for learning. Much used by reviewers of the first quarter of the nineteenth century; but now, from the general change of opinion on the education of women, nearly abandoned.' *New English Dictionary*.

Wraxall (*Memoirs*, ed. 1815, i. 140)

says that the Blue Stockings 'formed a very numerous, powerful, compact phalanx in the midst of London.'


<sup>3</sup> Lord Jeffrey said that there was no objection to the blue-stocking, provided the petticoat came low enough down.' Cockburn's *Memoirs*, ed. 1856, p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 424-6. Hannah More's *Bas Bleu* is addressed to her.

<sup>3</sup> According to Miss Burney, 'Lord Harcourt said, "Mrs. Vesey's fear of ceremony is really troublesome; for her eagerness to break a circle is such that she insists upon everybody's sitting with their backs one to another; that is, the chairs are drawn into little parties of three together in a confused manner all over the room."' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 184.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iii. 425, n. 3.

Now and then perhaps Mrs. Vesey might call the attention of the company in general to some circumstance of news, politics, or literature, of peculiar importance; or perhaps to an anecdote, or interesting account of some person known to the company in general. Of this last kind a laughable circumstance occurred about the year 1778, when Mrs. Carter was confined to her bed with a fever, which was thought to be dangerous. She was attended by her brother-in-law, Dr. Douglas, then a physician in Town, and he was in the habit of sending bulletins of the state of her health to her most intimate friends, with many of whom he was well acquainted himself. At one of Mrs. Vesey's parties a note was brought to her, which she immediately saw was from Dr. Douglas. 'Oh!' said she, before she opened it, 'this contains an account of our dear Mrs. Carter. We are all interested in her health: Dr. Johnson, pray read it out for the information of the company.' There was a profound silence; and the Doctor, with the utmost gravity, read aloud the physician's report of the happy effect which Mrs. Carter's medicines had produced, with a full and complete account of the circumstances attending them. Vol. i. p. 465.



## ANECDOTES BY JOSEPH CRADOCK<sup>1</sup>

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THE first time I dined in company with Dr. Johnson was at T. Davies's<sup>2</sup>, Russell Street, Covent Garden, as mentioned by Mr. Boswell, in his *Life of Johnson*<sup>3</sup>. On mentioning my engagement previously to a friend, he said, 'Do you wish to be well with Johnson?' 'To be sure, Sir,' I replied, 'or I should not have taken any pains to have been introduced into his company.' 'Why then, Sir,' says he, 'let me offer you some advice: you must not leave him soon after dinner to go to the play; during dinner he will be rather silent—it is a very

<sup>1</sup> 'From Mr. Cradock's Memoirs. [*Literary Memoirs*, 4 vols. London, 1828.] These anecdotes are certainly very loose and inaccurate; but as they have been republished in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1828, "with some corrections and additions from the author's MS.," I think it right to notice them; and, as they profess to be there enlarged from the MS., I copy this latter version, which differs, in some points, from the memoirs.'—Croker, ix. 236. Croker does not always follow the version in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 390.

Dr. Campbell said of Davies:—'he was not a bookseller, but a gentleman dealing in books.' Nichols's *Lit. Anec.* vi. 429 n. Perhaps he was too much of a gentleman, and too little of a tradesman, for less than two

years after this dinner Johnson wrote to Mrs. Montagu:—'Poor Davies, the bankrupt bookseller, is soliciting his friends to collect a small sum for the repurchase of part of his household stuff.' *Letters*, ii. 64.

<sup>3</sup> 'On Friday, April 12 [1776], I dined with him at our friend Tom Davies's, where we met Mr. Cradock, of Leicestershire, authour of *Zobeide*, a tragedy; a very pleasing gentleman; and Dr. Harwood, who has written and published various works; particularly a fantastical translation of the New Testament, in modern phrase, and with a Socinian twist.' *Life*, iii. 38.

'There is a new tragedy at Covent Garden, called *Zobeide*, which, I am told, is very indifferent, though written by a country-gentleman.' Walpole's *Letters*, v. 356.

serious

serious business with him<sup>1</sup>; between six and seven he will look about him, and see who remains, and, if he then at all likes the party, he will be very civil and communicative. He exactly fulfilled what my friend had prophesied. Mrs. Davies<sup>2</sup> did the honours of the table: she was a favourite with Johnson, who sat betwixt her and Dr. Harwood; I sat next, below, to Mr. Boswell opposite. Nobody could bring Johnson forward more civilly or properly than Davies. The subject of conversation turned upon the tragedy of *Œdipus*<sup>3</sup>. This was particularly interesting to me, as I was then employed in endeavouring to make such alterations in Dryden's play<sup>4</sup>, as to make it suitable to a revival at Drury Lane theatre. Johnson did not seem to think favourably of it; but I ventured to plead, that Sophocles wrote it expressly for the theatre, at the public cost, and that it was one of the most celebrated dramas of all antiquity. Johnson said, 'Œdipus was a poor miserable man, subjected to the greatest distress, without any degree of culpability of his own.' I urged, that Aristotle, as well as most of the Greek poets, were [*sic*] partial to this character; that Addison considered that, as terror and pity were particularly excited, he was the properest<sup>5</sup>—here Johnson suddenly becoming loud, I paused,

<sup>1</sup> 'When at table he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment; his looks seemed rivetted to his plate; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite.' *Life*, i. 468.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* i. 391, n. 2, 484.

'I am strongly affected by Mrs. Davies's tenderness,' Johnson wrote to her husband. *Ib.* iv. 231.

<sup>3</sup> 'I introduced' (writes Boswell) 'Aristotle's doctrine in his *Art of Poetry*, of "the κάθαρσις τῶν παθημάτων, the purging of the passions," as the purpose of tragedy. "But how are the passions to be purged by terror and pity?" said I, with an assumed air of ignorance, to incite

him to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address.'" *Ib.* iii. 39. Boswell does not mention any talk about *Œdipus*.

<sup>4</sup> '*Œdipus* is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca and Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes and composed the first and third acts.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 269.

<sup>5</sup> Addison quotes Aristotle's observation—"if we see a man of virtue, mixt with infirmities, fall into any misfortune, it does not only raise our pity, but our terror; because we are afraid that the like misfortune may happen to ourselves, who resemble the character of the suffering person." *The Spectator*, No. 273. See also *ib.* No. 297.

and

and rather apologized that it might not become me, perhaps, too strongly to contradict Dr. Johnson. 'Nay, Sir,' replied he, hastily, 'if I had not wished to have heard your arguments, I should not have disputed with you at all.' All went on quite pleasantly afterwards. We sat late, and something being mentioned about my going to Bath, when taking leave, Johnson very graciously said, 'I should have a pleasure in meeting you there'. Either Boswell or Davies immediately whispered to me. 'You're landed?'

The next time I had the pleasure of meeting him was at the Literary Club dinner at the coffee-house in St. James's Street<sup>3</sup>, to which I was introduced by my partial friend, Dr. Percy. Johnson that day was not in very good humour. We rather waited for dinner. Garrick came late, and apologized that he had been to the House of Lords, and Lord Camden insisted on conveying him in his carriage<sup>4</sup>. Johnson said nothing, but he looked a volume. The party was numerous. I sat next Mr. Burke at dinner. There was a beef-steak pie placed just before us; and I remarked to Mr. Burke that something smelt very disagreeable, and looked to see if there was not a dog under the table. Burke with great good humour said, 'I believe, Sir, I can tell you what is the cause; it is some of *my country*

<sup>1</sup> Three days later Johnson went to Bath with the Thrales. *Letters*, i. 391.

<sup>2</sup> 'My record upon this occasion does great injustice to Johnson's expression, which was so forcible and brilliant, that Mr. Cradock whispered me, "O that his words were written in a book!"' *Life*, iii. 39.

When, thirteen years earlier, Boswell was introduced to Johnson in the same parlour, Davies said to him, as he was leaving, 'Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well.' *Ib.* i. 395.

<sup>3</sup> Croker says that to this club no stranger is ever invited. Croker's *Boswell*, ix. 237 n. It met for some time at Parsloe's, St. James's Street.

<sup>4</sup> 'I told Johnson' (writes Boswell) 'that one morning, when I went to

breakfast with Garrick, who was very vain of his intimacy with Lord Camden, he accosted me thus:—"Pray now, did you—did you meet a little lawyer turning the corner, eh?"—"No, Sir, (said I.) Pray what do you mean by the question?"—"Why, (replied Garrick, with an affected indifference, yet as if standing on tip-toe,) Lord Camden has this moment left me. We have had a long walk together." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, Garrick talked very properly. Lord Camden was a little lawyer to be associating so familiarly with a player." *Life*, iii. 311.

'Lord Camden,' Bentham said, 'was a hobbledy-hoy, and had no polish of manners.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 118.



*butter* in the crust that smells so disagreeably.' Dr. Johnson just at this time, sitting opposite, desired one of us to send him some of the beef-steak pie. We sent but little, which he soon dispatched, and then returned his plate for more. Johnson particularly disliked that any notice should be taken of what he eat<sup>1</sup>, but Burke ventured to say he was glad to find that Dr. Johnson was anywise able to relish the beef-steak pie. Johnson, not perceiving what he alluded to, hastily exclaimed, 'Sir, there is a time of life when a man requires the repairs of the table!' The company rather talked for victory than social intercourse. I think it was in consequence of what passed that evening, that Dr. Goldsmith wrote his *Retaliation*<sup>2</sup>. Mr. Richard Burke was present, talked most, and seemed to be the most free and easy of any of the company<sup>3</sup>. I had never met him before. Burke seemed desirous of bringing his relative forward. In Mr. Chalmers's account of Goldsmith, different sorts of liquor are offered as appropriate to each guest. To the two Burkes ale from Wicklow, and wine from Ferney to me: my name is in italics, as supposing I am a wine-bibber; but the author's allusion to the wines of Ferney was meant for me, I rather think, from my having taken a plan of a tragedy from Voltaire.

Mrs. Percy, afterwards nurse to the Duke of Kent<sup>4</sup>, at Buckingham House, told me that Johnson once stayed near a month with them at their dull parsonage at Easton Mauduit<sup>5</sup>; that Dr. Percy looked out all sorts of books to be ready

<sup>1</sup> Boswell says that on their tour to the Highlands he contrived 'that Dr. Johnson should not be asked twice to eat or drink anything (which always disgusts him).' *Life*, v. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Cradock first met Johnson in 1776, more than two years after Goldsmith's death. Such a blunder as this shows that not much trust can be placed in his anecdotes. According to Cumberland (*Memoirs*, i. 369) it was at the St. James's Coffee House that the dinner took place which led to *Retaliation*.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Burke's brother, 'honest

Richard,' thus described in *Retaliation*:—

'What spirits were his! what wit and what whim!

Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb!

Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball!

Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!'

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, i. 414, n. 2. The Duke of Kent was the father of Queen Victoria.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson spent with the Percies part of June, July, and August of 1764. *Life*, i. 486, and *post* in Percy's *Anecdotes*. 'The little terrace in the for

for his amusement after breakfast, and that Johnson was so attentive and polite to her, that, when Dr. Percy mentioned the literature proposed in the study, he said, 'No, Sir, I shall first wait upon Mrs. Percy to feed the ducks.' But those halcyon days were about to change,—not as to Mrs. Percy, for to the last she remained a favourite with him.

I happened to be in London once when Dr. Percy returned from Northumberland, and found that he was expected to preach a charity sermon almost immediately. This had escaped his memory, and he said, that, though much fatigued, he had been obliged to sit up very late to furnish out something from former discourses; but, suddenly recollecting that Johnson's fourth *Idler* was exactly to his purpose, he had freely engrafted the greatest part of it. He preached, and his discourse was much admired; but being requested to print it, he most strenuously opposed the honour intended him, till he was assured by the governors, that it was absolutely necessary, as the annual contributions greatly depended on the account that was given in the appendix. In this dilemma, he earnestly requested that I would call upon Dr. Johnson, and state particulars. I assented, and endeavoured to introduce the subject with all due solemnity; but Johnson was highly diverted with his recital, and, laughing, said, 'Pray, Sir, give my kind respects to Dr. Percy, and tell him, I desire he will do whatever he pleases in regard to my *Idler*; it is entirely at his service<sup>1</sup>.'

garden [of the vicarage] is still called Dr. Johnson's walk.' Wheatley's *Percy's Reliques*, i. Preface, p. 75.

Miss Burney wrote in 1781 or 1782 :—'Mrs. Percy is a vulgar, fussy, proud woman; but very civil to us. Miss Percy is among the *very well*.' *Early Diary of F. Burney*, ii. 297. In 1791 she wrote :—'Mrs. Percy is very uncultivated and ordinary in manners and conversation, but a good creature, and much delighted to talk over the Royal Family, to one of whom she was formerly a nurse. Miss Percy is a natural and very pleasing character.' Mme. D'Arblay's

*Diary*, v. 256. It was Miss Percy whom, when a little girl, Johnson set down from his knee, telling her that he did not care one farthing for her as she had not read *Pilgrim's Progress*. *Life*, ii. 238, n. 5.

<sup>1</sup> This sermon, I have no doubt, was the one preached before the Sons of the Clergy on May 11, 1769; published by J. and F. Rivington, a copy of which is in the Bodleian Library. Johnson's thoughts are borrowed, but not his words.

This sermon was preached seven years before Cradock first met Johnson.

But these days of friendly communication were, from various causes, speedily to pass away, and worse than indifference to succeed; for, one morning Dr. Percy said to Mr. Cradock, 'I have not seen Dr. Johnson for a long time. I believe I must just call upon him, and greatly wish that you would accompany me. I intend,' said he, 'to tease him a little about Gibbon's pamphlet.' 'I hope not, Dr. Percy,' was my reply. 'Indeed I shall; for I have a great pleasure in combating his narrow prejudices.' We went together; and Dr. Percy opened with some anecdote from Northumberland House<sup>1</sup>, mentioned some rare books that were in the library; and then threw out that the town rang with applause of Gibbon's *Reply to Davis*; that the latter 'had written before he had read,' and that the two 'confederate doctors,' as Mr. Gibbon termed them, 'had fallen into some strange errors<sup>2</sup>.' Johnson said, he knew nothing of

<sup>1</sup> He had an apartment in Northumberland House, 'in which,' says Boswell, 'I have passed many an agreeable hour.' *Life*, iii. 420, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> H. E. Davis, a Bachelor of Arts of Oxford, published in 1778 *An Examination of the 15th and 16th Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History*. Gibbon, in *A Vindication*, answered at the same time the attacks of two Doctors of Divinity—Randolph and Chelsum. He describes how, 'oppressed with the same yoke, covered with the same trappings, they heavily move along, perhaps not with an equal pace, in the same beaten track of prejudice and preferment. . . . It was the misfortune of Mr. Davis that he undertook to *write* before he had *read*. But the two confederate doctors appear to be scholars of a higher form and longer experience; they enjoy a certain rank in their academical world; and as their zeal is enlightened by some rays of knowledge, so their desire to ruin the credit of their adversary is occasionally checked by the apprehension of

injuring their own.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, iv. 604.

Gibbon, in his *Autobiography* (*ib.* i. 231) writes:—'At the distance of twelve years I calmly affirm my judgment of Davis, Chelsum, &c. A victory over such antagonists was a sufficient humiliation. They, however, were rewarded in this world. Poor Chelsum was, indeed, neglected . . . but I enjoyed the pleasure of giving a royal pension to Mr. Davis.' *Ib.* i. 231.

Horace Walpole wrote to Gibbon (*Letters*, vii. 158):—'Davis and his prototypes tell you Middleton, &c. have used the same objections, and they have been *confuted*; *answering*, in the theologic dictionary, signifying *confuting*.'

'How utterly,' wrote Macaulay, 'all the attacks on Gibbon's History are forgotten! this of Whitaker; Randolph's; Chelsum's; Davies's; that stupid beast Joseph Milner's; even Watson's.' Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ed. 1877, ii. 285.

Davis's pamphlet, nor would he give him any answer as to Gibbon; but, if the 'confederate doctors,' as they were termed, had really made such mistakes as he had alluded to, they were blockheads. Dr. Percy talked on in the most careless style possible, but in a very lofty tone<sup>1</sup>; and Johnson appeared to be excessively angry. I only wished to get released: for, if Dr. Percy had proceeded to inform him that he had lately introduced Mr. Hume to dine at the King's chaplains' table, there must have been an explosion<sup>2</sup>.

Afterwards Percy rather loftily mentioned that he knew that the Duke of Northumberland would have a pleasure in lending him any books from his library. 'And if the offer is made, Sir,' Johnson only coldly replied, 'from a good motive it is very well;' and some time after, turning to me, said with a sigh: 'Many offer me crusts now, but I have no teeth to bite them.'

With all my partiality for Johnson, I freely declare, that I think Dr. Percy received very great cause to take real offence at one, who, by a ludicrous parody on a stanza in the *Hermit of Warkworth*, had rendered him contemptible. It was urged,

<sup>1</sup> If this story is true a strange and sudden change had come over Percy. It was less than a year earlier that Boswell's 'friendly scheme' obtained for him from Johnson a letter of explanation of which he said:—'I would rather have this than degrees from all the Universities in Europe.' In it Johnson wrote:—'Percy is a man whom I never knew to offend any one.' *Life*, iii. 276, 278.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon's *Vindication* is dated Feb. 3, 1779; Hume died on Aug. 25, 1776. Percy, writing to Hume in 1772, describes himself 'as not unknown to you when you resided in London.' *Letters of Eminent Persons to David Hume*, p. 317.

Gibbon, who belonged to the Literary Club, was disliked by Johnson and Boswell. 'Johnson talked with some disgust of his ugliness';

while Boswell wrote of him:—'He is an ugly, affected, disgusting fellow, and poisons our Literary Club to me.' *Life*, iv. 73. Malone, writing on Feb. 20, 1794, about the loss of Gibbon to the club by death, says:—'Independent of his literary merit, as a companion Gibbon was uncommonly agreeable. He had an immense fund of anecdote and of erudition of various kinds, both ancient and modern; and had acquired such a facility and elegance of talk that I had always great pleasure in listening to him. The manner and voice, though they were peculiar, and I believe artificial at first, did not at all offend, for they had become so appropriated as to appear natural.' *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Thirteenth Report, App. viii. 230.

that Johnson only meant to attack the metre; but he certainly turned the whole poem into ridicule:—

‘I put my hat upon my head,  
And walk’d into the Strand,  
And there I met another man  
With his hat in his hand’.

Mr. Garrick, in a letter to me, soon afterwards asked me, ‘Whether I had seen Johnson’s criticism on the *Hermit*; it is already,’ said he, ‘over half the town.’ Almost the last time that I ever saw Johnson, he said to me, ‘Notwithstanding all the pains that Dr. Farmer and I took to serve Dr. Percy, in regard to his *Ancient Ballads*, he has left town for Ireland<sup>2</sup>, without taking leave of either of us.’

Admiral Walsingham, who sometimes resided at Windsor, and sometimes in Portugal Street, frequently boasted that he was the only man to bring together miscellaneous parties, and make them all agreeable; and, indeed, there never before was so strange an assortment as I have occasionally met there. At one of his dinners were the Duke of Cumberland<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Johnson,

<sup>1</sup> *The Hermit* was published in 1771. There is no stanza of which this is a close parody, so far as the words are concerned. The nearest is the third:—

‘With hospitable haste he rose,  
And wak’d his sleeping fire;  
And snatching up a lighted brand  
Forth hied the reverend sire.’

<sup>2</sup> Percy was made Bishop of Dromore in 1782. According to Dr. Anderson (*Life of Johnson*, 3rd ed., p. 252), ‘Percy from a high sense of duty constantly resided there. The episcopal palace, which none of his predecessors had inhabited, and the demesne, formerly rude and uncultivated, owe to him their magnificence and picturesque beauty.’

<sup>3</sup> ‘It is possible,’ writes Mr. Croker, ‘Dr. Johnson may have been acquainted with the Hon. Robert Boyle,

who took the name of Walsingham; but it is hardly possible that Dr. Johnson should have met the Duke of Cumberland at dinner without Mr. Boswell’s having mentioned it.’ Croker’s *Boswell*, ix. 242 n. Mr. Croker forgets that there are men who can dine with a Duke and not boast of it.

‘Having observed the vain ostentatious importance of many people in quoting the authority of Dukes and Lords, as having been in their company, Dr. Johnson said, he went to the other extreme, and did not mention his authority when he should have done it, had it not been of a Duke or a Lord.’ *Life*, iv. 183. Boswell accused him of making ‘but an awkward return’ in leaving in his *Lives of the Poets* ‘an acknowledgement unappropriated to his Grace,’

Mr.

Mr. Nairn, the optician<sup>1</sup>, and Mr. Leoni, the singer: at another, Dr. Johnson, &c., and a young dashing officer, who determined, he whispered, to attack the old bear that we seemed all to stand in awe of. There was a good dinner, and during that important time Johnson was deaf to all impertinence. However, after the wine had passed rather freely, the young gentleman was resolved to bait him, and venture out a little further. 'Now, Dr. Johnson, do not look so glum, but be a little gay and lively, like others: what would you give, old gentleman, to be as young and sprightly as I am?' 'Why, Sir,' said he, 'I think I would almost be content to be as foolish.'

Johnson, it is well known, professed to recruit his acquaintance with younger persons<sup>2</sup>, and, in his latter days, I, with a few others, were [*sic*] more frequently honoured by his notice. At times he was very gloomy, and would exclaim, 'Stay with me, for it is a comfort to me'—a comfort that any feeling mind would wish to administer to a man so kind, though at times so boisterous, when he seized your hand, and repeated, 'Ay, Sir, but to die and go we know not where', &c.—here his morbid melancholy prevailed, and Garrick never spoke so impressively to the heart. Yet, to see him in the evening (though he took nothing stronger than lemonade<sup>3</sup>), a stranger would have concluded that our morning account was a fabrication. No hour was too late

the Duke of Newcastle. *Life*, iv. 63. Neither Boswell nor any of Johnson's biographers knew of his second interview with the king. *Ib.* ii. 42, n. 2.

The Admiral must, indeed, have been happy in his son, for Mr. Croker says:—'I have heard George IV speak most highly of this young Boyle Walsingham.' Walpole's *Letters*, viii. 502 n.

<sup>1</sup> In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1774, p. 472, is an account of 'Electrical Experiments by Mr. Edward Nairne, made with a Machine of his own Workmanship.' The writer says, 'the discharges of an electrical battery at ducks, cocks, and turkeys, however

curious to electricians, are painful to the humane.'

<sup>2</sup> In a book entitled *Lord Chesterfield's Witticisms*, 1774, p. 53, this story is assigned to Quin.

<sup>3</sup> 'He said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, "If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair."' *Life*, i. 300.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 439.

<sup>5</sup> See *post*, p. 100, where 'about five in the morning Johnson's face shone with meridian splendour, though his drink had been only lemonade.'

to

to keep him from the tyranny of his own gloomy thoughts. A gentleman venturing to say to Johnson, 'Sir, I wonder sometimes that you condescend so far as to attend a city club.' 'Sir, the great chair of a full and pleasant club is, perhaps, the throne of human felicity<sup>1</sup>.'

I had not the honour to be at all intimate with Johnson till about the time he began to publish his *Lives of the Poets*; and how he got through that arduous labour is, in some measure, still a mystery to me: he must have been greatly assisted by booksellers<sup>2</sup>. I had some time before lent him *Euripides* with Milton's manuscript notes: this, though he did not minutely examine (see Joddrel's *Euripides*), yet he very handsomely returned it, and mentioned it in his *Life of Milton*<sup>3</sup>. In the course of conversation one day I dropped out to him, that Lord Harborough (then the Rev.<sup>4</sup>) was in possession of a very valuable collection of manuscript poems, and that amongst them there were two or three in the handwriting of King James I; that they were bound up handsomely in folio, and were entitled *Sackville's Poems*. These he solicited me to borrow for him, and Lord Harborough very kindly intrusted them to me for his perusal.

Harris's *Hermes* was mentioned. I said, 'I think the book is too abstruse; it is heavy.' 'It is; but a work of that kind

<sup>1</sup> Cradock misquotes Hawkins (*post*, p. 91)—'A tavern chair is the throne of human felicity.' See also *Life*, ii. 452.

<sup>2</sup> Cradock, I suppose, means that they lent him books, and supplied him with facts, and not as Mr. Croker thinks (ix. 243 *n.*) that they assisted him in his manuscript. Thus he writes to John Nichols desiring that 'some volumes published of Prior's papers in two vols. 8vo. may be procured.' *Letters*, ii. 130. Another day he writes:—'Mr. Johnson is obliged to Mr. Nicol [*sic*] for his

communication, and must have Hammond again. Mr. Johnson would be glad of Blackmore's *Essays* for a few days.' *Ib.* ii. 159.

<sup>3</sup> 'His *Euripides* is by Mr. Cradock's kindness now in my hands; the margin is sometimes noted, but I have found nothing remarkable.' *Works*, vii. 114.

<sup>4</sup> When Johnson was writing the *Lives* the Rev. Robert Sherard was Earl of Harborough, for it was in 1770 that he succeeded his brother, who, in spite of marrying four times, left no heir. *Burke's Peerage*.

must

must be heavy<sup>1</sup>. 'A rather dull man of my acquaintance asked me,' said I, 'to lend him some book to entertain him, and I offered him Harris's *Hermes*, and as I expected, from the title, he took it for a novel; when he returned it, I asked him how he liked it, and, what he thought of it? "Why, to speak the truth," says he, "I was not much diverted; I think all these imitations of *Tristram Shandy* fall far short of the original!"' This had its effect, and almost produced from Johnson a rhinoceros laugh<sup>2</sup>.

One of Dr. Johnson's rudest speeches was to a pompous gentleman coming out of Lichfield cathedral, who said, 'Dr. Johnson, we have had a most excellent discourse to-day!' 'That may be,' said Johnson; 'but, it is impossible that you should know it.'

Of his kindness to me during the last years of his most valuable life, I could enumerate many instances. One slight circumstance, if any were wanting, would give an excellent proof of the goodness of his heart, and that to a person whom he found in distress. In such a case he was the very last man that would have given even the least momentary uneasiness to any one, had he been aware of it. The last time I saw him was just before I went to France. He said, with a deep sigh, 'I wish I was going with you.' He had just then been disappointed of going to Italy<sup>3</sup>. Of all men I ever knew, Dr. Johnson was the most instructive.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 187.

<sup>2</sup> 'For my own part, I like Harris's writings much. But Tooke thought meanly of them: he would say, "Lord Malmesbury is as great a fool as *his father*" [Harris was the father of the first Earl of Malmesbury].' Rogers's *Table Talk*, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> 'Johnson's laugh was a kind of good-humoured growl. Tom Davies

described it drolly enough: "He laughs like a rhinoceros."'' *Life*, ii. 378.

<sup>3</sup> Cradock started for Italy on Oct. 29, 1783. Johnson was disappointed of going there in 1776. *Life*, iii. 27. There was some project of his going in 1780 and 1781 (*Letters*, ii. 191), and again in 1784. *Life*, iv. 326.



## ANECDOTES

### BY RICHARD CUMBERLAND

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[FROM *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland, written by himself.*  
2 vols. London, 1807.

Johnson, writing to Mrs. Thrale, who was at Brighton, says:—  
‘The want of company is an inconvenience, but Mr. Cumberland is a million.’ *Letters*, ii. 111. There is nothing in Boswell to show that Cumberland was much with Johnson. Northcote told Hazlitt that Johnson and his friends ‘never admitted him as one of the set; Sir Joshua did not invite him to dinner.’ *Conversations of Northcote*, p. 385.

Rogers described him as ‘a most agreeable companion, and a very entertaining converser. His theatrical anecdotes were related with infinite spirit and humour.’ Rogers’s *Table Talk*, p. 136.

‘I once (says W. Maltby) dined at Dilly’s with Parr, Priestley, Cumberland, and some other distinguished people. Cumberland, who belonged to the family of the Blandishes, be-praised Priestley to his face, and after he had left the party spoke of him very disparagingly. This excited Parr’s extremest wrath. When I met him a few days after he said:—‘Only think of Mr. Cumberland! that he should have presumed to talk *before me,—before me, Sir*—in such terms of *my* friend Dr. Priestley! Pray, Sir, let Mr. Dilly know my opinion of Mr. Cumberland—that his ignorance is equalled only by his impertinence, and that both are exceeded by his malice.’ *Ib.* p. 314.

Sir Walter Scott thus writes of Cumberland:—‘January 12, 1826.—Mathews last night gave us a very perfect imitation of  
old

old Cumberland, who carried the poetic jealousy and irritability farther than any man I ever saw. He was a great flatterer, too, the old rogue. . . . A very high-bred man in point of manners in society.' Lockhart's *Scott*, ed. 1839, viii. 193.

In his *Biographical Memoirs* (ed. 1834, iii. 227) Scott adds: 'In the little pettish sub-acidity of temper which Cumberland sometimes exhibited there was more of humorous sadness than of ill-will, either to his critics or his contemporaries. . . . These imperfections detract nothing from the character of the man of worth, the scholar and the gentleman.'

For his jealousy see *Letters*, ii. 112, 115, 122. His grave in Westminster Abbey is close to Johnson's.

His anecdotes must be received with great distrust. His account of the dinner before the first night of *She Stoops to Conquer*, at which Johnson took the chair, is so manifestly 'a romance'—to use Mr. Forster's words—that I have not quoted it. See Cumberland's *Memoirs*, i. 367, and Forster's *Goldsmith*, ed. 1871, ii. 339.]

WHO will say that Johnson himself would have been such a champion in literature, such a front-rank soldier in the fields of fame, if he had not been pressed into the service, and driven on to glory with the bayonet of sharp necessity pointed at his back? If fortune had turned him into a field of clover, he would have laid down and rolled in it. The mere manual labour of writing would not have allowed his lassitude and love of ease to have taken the pen out of the inkhorn<sup>1</sup>, unless the cravings of

<sup>1</sup> 'I allow (said Johnson) you may have pleasure from writing, after it is over, if you have written well; but you don't go willingly to it again.' *Life*, iv. 219.

'There is not a more painful action of the mind than invention.' Addison in *The Spectator*, No. 487.

'His ditty sweet

He loathed much to write, ne cared to repeat.'

*Castle of Indolence*, canto i. stanza 68.

'Reading, Mr. Gray has often told me, was much more agreeable to him

than writing.' Mason's *Gray*, ii. 25.

'I am,' wrote Hume to Strahan, 'perhaps the only author you ever knew who gratuitously employed great industry in correcting a work of which he has fully alienated the property.' *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. 183.

Of Pope, Johnson wrote:—'To make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last. . . . He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure.' *Works*, viii. 321. See also *post*, p. 90.

hunger

hunger had reminded him that he must fill the sheet before he saw the table cloth. He might indeed have knocked down Osbourne for a blockhead, but he would not have knocked him down with a folio of his own writing<sup>1</sup>. He would perhaps have been the dictator of a club, and wherever he sat down to conversation, there must have been that splash of strong bold thought about him, that we might still have had a collectanea after his death; but of prose I guess not much, of works of labour none, of fancy perhaps something more, especially of poetry, which, under favour, I consider was not his tower of strength. I think we should have had his *Rasselas* at all events, for he was likely enough to have written at Voltaire, and brought the question to the test, if infidelity is any aid to wit<sup>2</sup>. An orator he must have been; not improbably a parliamentarian, and, if such, certainly an oppositionist, for he preferred to talk against the tide. He would indubitably have been no member of the Whig Club, no partisan of Wilkes, no friend of Hume, no believer in Macpherson; he would have put up prayers for early rising, and laid in bed all day, and with the most active resolutions possible been the most indolent mortal living. (Volume i. p. 353.)

Alas! I am not fit to paint his character: nor is there need of it; *Etiam mortuus loquitur*<sup>3</sup>: every man, who can buy a book, has bought a *Boswell*; Johnson is known to all the reading world. I also knew him well, respected him highly, loved him sincerely: it was never my chance to see him in those moments of moroseness and ill humour, which are imputed to him, perhaps with truth, for who would slander him? But I am not warranted by any experience of those humours to speak of him otherwise than of a friend, who always met me with kindness, and from whom I never separated without regret. —When I sought his company he had no capricious excuses for withholding it, but lent himself to every invitation with cordiality, and brought good humour with him, that gave life to the circle

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 304, 381.

<sup>2</sup> Cumberland wrongly thought that *Rasselas* was an answer to *Can-*

*dide*. *Life*, i. 342; *Letters*, i. 79 n.

<sup>3</sup> 'He being dead yet speaketh.' Heb. xi. 4.

he was in. He presented himself always in his fashion of apparel; a brown coat with metal buttons, black waistcoat and worsted stockings, with a flowing bob wig<sup>1</sup> was the style of his wardrobe, but they were in perfectly good trim<sup>2</sup>, and with the ladies, which he generally met, he had nothing of the slovenly philosopher about him; he fed heartily, but not voraciously<sup>3</sup>, and was extremely courteous in his commendations of any dish that pleased his palate; he suffered his next neighbour to squeeze the China oranges<sup>4</sup> into his wine glass after dinner, which else perchance had gone aside, and trickled into his shoes, for the good man had neither straight sight nor steady nerves.

At the tea table he had considerable demands upon his favourite beverage, and I remember when Sir Joshua Reynolds at my house reminded him that he had drank eleven cups, he replied—‘Sir, I did not count your glasses of wine<sup>5</sup>, why should you number up my cups of tea?’ And then laughing in perfect good humour he added—‘Sir, I should have released the lady

<sup>1</sup> Johnson defines a *bobwig* as a *short wig*, so that *flowing* seems an inconsistent epithet.

<sup>2</sup> Cumberland could only have known him after his dress had been improved by associating with the Thrales. *Life*, iii. 325. Johnson seems to show how regardless he was of dress by his note on *King John*, Act iv. sc. 2, where Hubert describes a smith,

‘Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste

Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet.’

On this Johnson remarks:—‘Shakespeare seems to have founded a man’s shoes with his gloves. He that is frightened or hurried may put his hand into the wrong glove, but either shoe will equally admit either foot. The authour seems to be disturbed by the disorder which he describes.’ Johnson’s slippers were his old shoes. *Life*, i. 396; ii. 406.

<sup>3</sup> This is at variance with the accounts of Boswell (*Life*, i. 468; iv. 72) and Hawkins (*post*, p. 105).

‘Violent hunger, though upon many occasions not only natural, but unavoidable, is always indecent, and to eat voraciously is universally regarded as a piece of ill manners.’ Adam Smith’s *Moral Sentiments*, ed. 1801, i. 45.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, ii. 330.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson wrote on Jan. 21, 1775:—‘Reynolds has taken too much to strong liquor, and seems to delight in his new character.’ *Life*, ii. 292. ‘SIR JOSHUA. “You have sat by quite sober, and felt an envy of the happiness of those who were drinking.” JOHNSON. “Perhaps contempt.”’ *ib.* iii. 41. ‘SIR JOSHUA. “At first the taste of wine was disagreeable to me; but I brought myself to drink it, that I might be like other people.”’ *ib.* iii. 329.

from

from any further trouble, if it had not been for your remark ; but you have reminded me that I want one of the dozen, and I must request Mrs. Cumberland to round up my number—" When he saw the readiness and complacency with which my wife obeyed his call, he turned a kind and cheerful look upon her and said—"Madam, I must tell you for your comfort you have escaped much better than a certain lady did awhile ago, upon whose patience I intruded greatly more than I have done on yours ; but the lady asked me for no other purpose but to make a Zany of me, and set me gabbling to a parcel of people I knew nothing of ; so, Madam, I had my revenge of her ; for I swallowed five and twenty cups of her tea<sup>1</sup>, and did not treat her with as many words.' I can only say my wife would have made tea for him as long as the New River could have supplied her with water.

It was on such occasions he was to be seen in his happiest moments ; when animated by the cheering attention of friends, whom he liked, he would give full scope to those talents for narration, in which I verily think he was unrivalled both in the brilliancy of his wit, the flow of his humour, and the energy of his language. Anecdotes of times past, scenes of his own life, and characters of humourists, enthusiasts, crack-brained projectors and a variety of strange beings, that he had chanced upon, when detailed by him at length, and garnished with those episodical remarks, sometimes comic, sometimes grave, which he would throw in with infinite fertility of fancy, were a treat, which though not always to be purchased by five and twenty cups of tea, I have often had the happiness to enjoy for less than half the number. He was easily led into topics<sup>2</sup> ; it was

<sup>1</sup> The number of the cups no doubt grew in the stories about Johnson. Lord Eldon said that his wife 'had herself helped him one evening to fifteen cups.' Twiss's *Eldon*, ed. 1846, i. 65. See *post*, p. 105, n. 4, for Lady Macleod's helping him to sixteen. Cumberland, at one bold leap, raises the number to twenty-five. For the price of tea see *ante*, i. 135. A South Carolinian lady whose sons

were at school in England wrote to a friend in 1759:—"At Whitsuntide they used to make the housekeeper [of the school] the present of a guinea for a pound of tea.' *Eliza Pinckney*, by H. H. Ravenel, New York, 1896, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> For Johnson's not starting a subject of talk see *ante*, i. 290 ; *Life*, iii. 307, n. 2 ; iv. 304, n. 4.

not easy to turn him from them ; but who would wish it ? If a man wanted to show himself off by getting up and riding upon him, he was sure to run restive and kick him off ; you might as safely have backed Bucephalus, before Alexander had lunged<sup>1</sup> him. Neither did he always like to be over-fondled ; when a certain gentleman out-acted his part in this way, he is said to have demanded of him—‘What provokes your risibility, Sir ? Have I said anything that you understand ?—Then I ask pardon of the rest of the company—’ But this is Henderson’s anecdote of him, and I won’t swear he did not make it himself<sup>2</sup>. The following apology however I myself drew from him, when speaking of his tour I observed to him upon some passages as rather too sharp upon a country and people who had entertained him so handsomely—‘Do you think so, Cumbey<sup>3</sup> ?’ he replied.—‘Then I give you leave to say, and you may quote me for it, that there are more gentlemen in Scotland than there are shoes<sup>4</sup>.’

The expanse of matter, which Johnson had found room for in his intellectual storehouse, the correctness with which he had assorted it, and the readiness with which he could turn to any article that he wanted to make present use of<sup>5</sup> were the properties in him which I contemplated with the most admiration. Some have called him a savage ; they were only so far right in the resemblance, as that, like the savage, he never came into suspicious company without his spear in his hand and his bow and quiver at his back. In quickness of intellect few ever equalled him, in profundity of erudition many have surpassed him. I do not think he had a pure and classical taste, nor was apt to be best pleased with the best authors<sup>6</sup>, but as a general

<sup>1</sup> *To lunge* is not in Johnson’s Dictionary.

<sup>2</sup> Cumberland tells it also in his *Observer*, No. 25. See *Life*, iv. 64, n. 2. John Henderson, the actor, no doubt is meant, who, as a mimic, ‘did not represent Johnson correctly.’ *Life*, ii. 326, n. 5.

<sup>3</sup> For Johnson’s abbreviations of his friends’ names see *Life*, ii. 258.

<sup>4</sup> At Elgin he noted that ‘a very

great proportion of the people are barefoot.’ *Letters*, i. 239.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Sir Joshua observed to me the extraordinary promptitude with which Johnson flew upon an argument.’ *Life*, ii. 365.

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Carter’s father wrote to her of Johnson in 1738 :—‘I a little suspect his judgment if he is very fond of Martial.’ Pennington’s *Carter*, i. 39.

scholar he ranks very high. When I would have consulted him upon certain points of literature, whilst I was making my collections from the Greek dramatists for my essays in *The Observer*, he candidly acknowledged that his studies had not lain amongst them, and certain it is there is very little shew of literature in his *Ramblers*, and in the passage, where he quotes Aristotle, he has not correctly given the meaning of the original<sup>1</sup>. (Volume i. p. 356.)

<sup>1</sup> *Rambler*, No. 139.

*EXTRACTS*  
*FROM SIR JOHN HAWKINS'S LIFE*  
*OF JOHNSON*

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[ACCORDING to Miss Hawkins (*Memoirs*, i. 158) Strahan and Cadell called on her father, in the name of the booksellers, 'who meant to collect and publish Johnson's works, and had commissioned them to ask him to write the *Life*, and to oversee the whole publication. They offered him £200.'

For Boswell's account of Hawkins's book see *Life*, i. 26.

'Sir John Hawkins was originally bred a lawyer, in which profession he did not succeed. Having married a gentlewoman who by her brother's death proved a considerable fortune he bought a house at Twickenham, intending to give himself up to his studies and music, of which he was very fond. He now commenced a justice of peace; and being a very honest moral man, but of no brightness, and very obstinate and contentious, he grew hated by the lower class and very troublesome to the gentry, with whom he went to law both on public and private causes; at the same time collecting materials indefatigably for a History of Music.' Horace Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, i. 421.

Horace Walpole, writing on Dec. 3, 1776, of Hawkins's *History of Music*, says (*Letters*, vi. 395):—'I have been three days at Strawberry and have not seen a creature but Sir John Hawkins's five volumes, the two last of which, thumping as they are, I literally did read in two days. They are old books to all intents and purposes, very old books; and what is new is like old books too, that is, full of minute facts that delight antiquaries. . . . My friend, Sir John, is a matter-of-fact-man, and  
does



does now and then stoop very low in quest of game. Then he is so exceedingly religious and grave as to abhor mirth, except it is printed in the old black letter, and then he calls the most vulgar ballad pleasant and full of humour. He thinks nothing can be sublime but an anthem, and Handel's choruses heaven upon earth. However he writes with great moderation, temper and good sense, and the book is a very valuable one. I have begged his Austerity to relax in one point, for he ranks comedy with farce and pantomime. Now I hold a perfect comedy to be the perfection of human composition, and believe firmly that fifty Iliads and Æneids could be written sooner than such a character as Falstaff's.'

On Feb. 28, 1782, Walpole wrote to Mason (*Ib.* viii. 169):— 'I am sorry you will fall on my poor friend Sir John, who is a most inoffensive and good being. Do not wound harmless simpletons, you who can gibbet convicts of magnitude.' Mason replied that 'Hawkins has shown himself petulant and impertinent in several parts of his history, and especially on the subject of honest John Gay.' *Ib.* p. 170.

Bentham, speaking of about the year 1767, said:— 'I liked to go to Sir John Hawkins': he used to talk to me of his quarrels, and he was always quarrelling. He had a fierce dispute with Dr. Hawkesworth, who wrote the *Adventurer* and managed the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which he called his Dragon. He had a woman in his house with red hair; and this circumstance, of which Hawkins availed himself, gave him much advantage in the controversy. Hawkins was alway tormenting me with his disputatious correspondence; always wondering how there could be so much depravity in human nature; yet he was himself a good-for-nothing follow, haughty and ignorant, picking up little anecdotes and little bits of knowledge. He was a man of sapient look.'

'Dr. Percy (writes Malone) concurred with every other person I have heard speak of Hawkins, in saying that he was a most detestable fellow. Dyer knew him well at one time, and the Bishop heard him give a character of Hawkins once that painted him in the blackest colours. Dyer said that he knew instances of his setting a husband against a wife, and a brother against a brother; fomenting

fomenting their animosity by anonymous letters. I had some conversation with Sir J. Reynolds relative to both Hawkins and Dyer. He observes that Hawkins, though he assumed great outward sanctity, was not only mean and grovelling in disposition, but absolutely dishonest. After the death of Dr. Johnson, he, as one of his executors, laid hold of his watch and several trinkets, coins, &c., which he said he should take to himself for his trouble. Sir Joshua and Sir Wm. Scott, the other executors, remonstrated against this, and with great difficulty *compelled* him to give up the watch, which Dr. Johnson's servant, Francis Barber, now has; but the coins and old pieces of money they could never get. The executors had several meetings relative to the business of their trust. Hawkins was paltry enough to bring them in a bill, charging his coach hire for every time they met. With all this meanness, if not dishonesty, he was a regular churchman, assuming the character of a most rigid and sanctimonious censurer of the lightest foibles of others. He never lived in any real intimacy with Dr. Johnson, who never opened his heart to him, or had in fact any accurate knowledge of his character.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 426.

Sir Joshua Reynolds perhaps had Hawkins in his mind when he said that 'Johnson appeared to have little suspicion of hypocrisy in religion.' *Life*, i. 418, n.

That the two men were not intimate is confirmed by Boswell's statement, who says:—'I never saw Sir John Hawkins in Dr. Johnson's company I think but once, and I am sure not above twice. Johnson might have esteemed him for his decent, religious demeanour and his knowledge of books and literary history; but from the rigid formality of his manners it is evident that they never could have lived together with companionable ease and familiarity.' *Life*, i. 27.

Johnson himself said of him:—'As to Sir John, why really I believe him to be an honest man at the bottom; but to be sure he is penurious, and he is mean, and it must be owned he has a degree of brutality, and a tendency to savageness, that cannot easily be defended.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 65.

The story of the watch got abroad, and was thus sarcastically dealt with by Porson in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for Sept. 1787,

p. 752 (Porson's *Tracts*, p. 342):—'In the Life [by Hawkins], p. 460, 461, we have an ample description of a watch that Johnson bought for seventeen guineas; but, just as we expect some important consequence from this solemn introduction, the history breaks off, and suddenly opens another subject. Now, Mr. Urban, some days ago I picked up a printed octavo leaf, seemingly cancelled and rejected. It was so covered with mud and dirt that I could only make out part of it, which I here send you, submitting it to better judgment, whether this did not originally fill the chasm that every reader of taste and feeling must at once perceive in the history of the watch. It is more difficult to find a reason why it was omitted. But I am persuaded that the person who is the object of Sir John's satire was so hurt at the home truths contained in it, that he tampered with the printers to have it suppressed.

FRAGMENT.

..... 'And here, touching this watch already by me mentioned, I insert a notable instance of the craft and selfishness of the Doctor's Negro servant. A few days after that whereon Dr. Johnson died, this artful fellow came to me, and surrendered the watch, saying at the same time, that his master had delivered it to him a day or two before his demise, with such demeanour and gestures that he did verily believe it was his intention that he, namely Frank, should keep the same. Myself knowing that no sort of credit was due to a black domestic and favourite servant, and withal considering that the wearing thereof would be more proper for myself, and that I had got nothing by my trust of executor save sundry old books, and coach-hire for journeys during the discharge of the said office; and further reflecting on what I have occasion elsewhere to mention, *viz.* that, since the abolishing general warrants, *temp. Geo. iii*<sup>1</sup>, no

<sup>1</sup> On April 30, 1763, Wilkes had been arrested on 'a general warrant directed to four messengers to take up any persons without naming or describing them with any certainty, and to bring them, together with their

papers.' Such a warrant as this Chief Justice Pratt (Lord Camden) declared to be 'unconstitutional, illegal, and absolutely void.' The messengers 'broke open every closet, bureau, and drawer in Mr. Wilkes's good

good articles in this branch can be had any longer in England, I took the watch from him, intending to have it appraised by my own jeweller, a very honest and expert artificer, and, in so doing, to have bought it as cheap as I could for myself, let it cost what it would. Upon my signifying this my intention to Frank, the impudent Negro said, "he plainly saw there was no good intended for him;" and in anger left me. He then posted to my colleagues, the other executors; and there being in the people of this country a general propensity to humanity, notwithstanding all my exertions to counteract the same both in writing<sup>2</sup> and otherwise; this being the case, I say, he had found means to prepossess them so entirely in his favour that they snubbed me, and insisted with me that I should make restitution. Finally, though perhaps I should not have been made amenable to any known judicature by keeping the watch, I consented, being compelled thereto, to let this worthless fellow retain that testimony of his master's ill-directed benevolence *in extremis*<sup>3</sup>.

Malone wrote to Lord Charlemont on Nov. 7, 1787:—"You perhaps have not heard of a very curious fact. Sir John wanted to cheat poor Frank, Johnson's servant, of a gold watch and cane, and Frank, not choosing to lose them, from that time became as black again as he was before." *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Thirteenth Report, App. viii. 62.]

THERE dwelt at Lichfield a gentleman of the name of Butt, the father of the reverend Mr. Butt, now a King's Chaplain<sup>4</sup>, to whose house on holidays and in school-vacations Johnson was ever welcome. The children in the family, perhaps offended with the rudeness of his behaviour, would frequently call him

house.' Porson implies that in such a search as this a man's watch might be carried off. See *Annual Register*, 1763, i. 135; Almon's *Memoirs of Wilkes*, i. 107; Boswell's *Johnson*, ii. 72, and *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. 207.

<sup>1</sup> A quotation from Hawkins, p. 604 n.

<sup>2</sup> 'See Sir John's proofs that every prisoner ought to be convicted, and every convict hanged. *Ib.* pp. 521-3.' *Note by Porson.*

<sup>3</sup> A quotation from Hawkins, pp. 599, 605.

<sup>4</sup> A Rev. Mr. Butt attended Johnson's funeral. *Letters* ii. 434.

the great boy, which the father once overhearing, said, 'you call him the great boy, but take my word for it, he will one day prove a great man'.<sup>1</sup>

A more particular character of him while a schoolboy, and of his behaviour at school, I find in a paper now before me, written by a person yet living<sup>2</sup>, and of which the following is a copy:

'Johnson and I were, in early life, school-fellows at Lichfield, and for many years in the same class. As his uncommon abilities for learning far exceeded us, we endeavoured by every boyish piece of flattery to gain his assistance, and three of us, by turns, used to call on him in a morning, on one of whose backs, supported by the other two, he rode triumphantly to school. He never associated with us in any of our diversions, except in the winter when the ice was firm, to be drawn along by a boy barefooted. His ambition to excel was great, though his application to books, as far as it appeared, was very trifling. I could not oblige him more than by sauntering away every vacation, that occurred, in the fields, during which time he was more engaged in talking to himself than his companion. Verses or themes he would dictate to his favourites, but he would never be at the trouble of writing them. His dislike to business was so great, that he would procrastinate his exercises to the last

<sup>1</sup> Percy, writing of Johnson at Stourbridge School, says:—'Here his genius was so distinguished that, although little better than a school-boy, he was admitted into the best company of the place, and had no common attention paid to his conversation; of which remarkable instances were long remembered there.' Anderson's *Johnson*, ed. 1815, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Hector. *Life*, i. 47.

Boswell recorded in his note-book in March, 1776:—'Mr. Hector, surgeon at Birmingham, who was at school with him, and used to buy tarts with him of Dame Reid, told me that he had the same extraordinary superiority over the boys of the same age with himself that he

has now over men. That he seemed to learn by intuition the contents of any book, that the boys submitted to him, and paid him great respect. . . . That he used to have oatmeal porridge for breakfast. That his father was a very sensible man, and very successful as a bookseller and stationer—used to open a shop once a week at Birmingham; but was a loser by a manufacture of parchment which he set up. That his mother was a very remarkable woman for good understanding. I asked him if she was not vain of her son, Mr. Hector said she had too much good sense to be vain, but she knew her son's value.' *Morrison Autographs*, 2nd Series, i. 368.

hour. I have known him after a long vacation, in which we were rather severely tasked<sup>1</sup>, return to school an hour earlier in the morning, and begin one of his exercises, in which he purposely left some faults, in order to gain time to finish the rest.

I never knew him corrected at school, unless it was for talking and diverting other boys from their business, by which, perhaps, he might hope to keep his ascendancy. He was uncommonly inquisitive, and his memory so tenacious, that whatever he read or heard he never forgot. I remember rehearsing to him eighteen verses, which after a little pause he repeated verbatim, except one epithet, which improved the line.

After a long absence from Lichfield, when he returned I was apprehensive of something wrong in his constitution<sup>2</sup>, which might either impair his intellect or endanger his life, but, thanks to Almighty God, my fears have proved false.' (Page 6.)

[When Johnson was at Pembroke College<sup>3</sup>] the want of that assistance, which scholars in general derive from their parents, relations, and friends, soon became visible in his garb and appearance, which, though in some degree concealed by a scholar's gown, and that we know is never deemed the less honourable for being old, was so apparent as to excite pity in some that saw and noticed him. He had scarce any change of raiment, and, in a short time after Corbet<sup>4</sup> left him, but one pair of shoes, and those so old, that his feet were seen through them: a gentleman of his college, the father of an eminent clergyman now living, directed a servitor one morning to place a new pair

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson matriculated on Oct. 31, 1728, and no doubt received from the Vice-Chancellor a document similar to the following, which is pasted in at the end of a copy of *Parechola sive Excerpta e corpore Statutorum Universitatis Oxoniensis*. It was shown me by Mr. Viner Ellis, a descendant of Johnson's contemporary at Pembroke to whom it had been given.

<sup>4</sup> *Oxoniz*. Dec. 14. Anno Domini 1727.

'Quo die comparuit coram me Joshua Ellis e Coll Pembr generosi fil et subscripsit Articulis Fidei, et Religionis; et juramentum suscepit de agnoscenda suprema Regiæ Majestatis potestate; et de observandis Statutis, Privilegiis et Consuetudinibus hujus Universitatis.

'Jo. Mather, Vice-Can.'

William Pitt entered Trinity College on Jan. 10, 1728. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1784, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 58; *ante*, i. 362.

at the door of Johnson's chamber, who, seeing them upon his first going out, so far forgot himself and the spirit that must have actuated his unknown benefactor, that, with all the indignation of an insulted man, he threw them away<sup>1</sup>. (Page 10.)

In this course of learning, his favourite objects were classical literature, ethics, and theology, in the latter whereof he laid the foundation by studying the Fathers<sup>2</sup>. If we may judge from the magnitude of his *Adversaria*, which I have now by me<sup>3</sup>, his

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 77.

Johnson's difficulties no doubt were increased by the general dearth during his residence at College. The year in which he entered, 1728, wheat stood higher than it did in a period of more than fifty years. 1729 also was a dear year. *Wealth of Nations*, ed. 1811, i. 359. See *ante*, i. 129, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 'He told me what he read *solidly* at Oxford was Greek; . . . that the study of which he was the most fond was Metaphysicks, but he had not read much even in that way.' *Life*, i. 70.

Boswell recorded in his notebook:—'Ashbourne, 20 Sept. 1777. Dr. Johnson told me that he had been always idle. That his most determinate application had been within these ten years in reading Greek. That the reading which he had loved most was metaphysicks; but that he had not read much even in that way. That he very early loved to read poetry, but hardly ever read any poem to an end. That he read in Shakespeare at a very early time of life, so early that he remembers being afraid to read the speech of the Ghost in *Hamlet* when alone. That Horace's *Odes* have been the composition in which he has taken most delight.' *Morrison Autographs*, 2nd Series, i. 372. For his Greek see *ante*, i. 183.

<sup>3</sup> See *Life*, i. 205, and *post*, p. 129, where Hawkins was detected in pocketing two volumes in Johnson's handwriting. Some volumes he either secreted, or Johnson neglected to destroy, when he burnt his private papers; for Hawkins not only had these *Adversaria*, but other volumes of a much more private nature, which he thus describes: 'To enable him at times to review his progress in life, and to estimate his improvement in religion, he, in the year 1734, began to note down the transactions of each day, recollecting, as well as he was able, those of his youth, and interspersing such reflections and resolutions as, under particular circumstances, he was induced to make. This register, which he intitled "*Annales*," does not form an entire volume, but is contained in a variety of little books folded and stitched together by himself, and which were found mixed with his papers. Some specimens of these notanda have been lately printed with his prayers.'

'It was my business (writes Miss Hawkins, *Memoirs*, i. 188) to select from his little books of self-examination, which came into my father's hands, the passages that should be printed as specimens; and I rejected, as subject to wild surmises, those which contained marks known only in their significations by himself.' See also *Life*, iv. 406, n. 1.

plan

plan for study was a very extensive one. The heads of science, to the extent of six folio volumes, are copiously branched throughout it; but, as is generally the case with young students, the blank far exceed in number the written leaves.

To say the truth, the course of his studies was far from regular: he read by fits and starts, and, in the intervals, digested his reading by meditation, to which he was ever prone. Neither did he regard the hours of study, farther than the discipline of the college compelled him. It was the practice in his time, for a servitor, by order of the Master, to go round to the rooms of the young men, and knocking at the door, to enquire if they were within, and, if no answer was returned, to report them absent<sup>1</sup>. Johnson could not endure this intrusion, and would frequently be silent, when the utterance of a word would have insured him from censure; and, farther to be revenged for being disturbed when he was profitably employed as perhaps he could be, would join with others of the young men in the college in hunting, as they called it, the servitor, who was thus diligent in his duty; and this they did with the noise of pots and candlesticks, singing to the tune of Chevy-chace, the words in that old ballad,

‘To drive the deer with hound and horn,’ &c.,

not seldom to the endangering the life and limbs of the unfortunate victim. (Page 12.)

It was wonderful to see, when he took up a book, with what eagerness he perused, and with what haste his eye travelled over it: he has been known to read a volume, and that not a small one, at a sitting; nor was he inferior in the power of memory to him with whom he is compared [Magliabechi]; whatever he read, became his own for ever, with all the advantages that a penetrating judgment and deep reflection could add to it. I have heard him repeat, with scarce a mistake of

<sup>1</sup> Whitefield, who entered the College soon after Johnson left, records:—‘It being my duty, as servitor, in my turn to knock at the gentlemen’s rooms by ten at night, to

see who were in their rooms, I thought the devil would appear to me every stair I went up.’ Tyerman’s *Whitefield*, i. 20.



a word, passages from favourite authors, of three or four octavo pages in length'. (Page 16.)

He could not, at this early period of his life, divest himself of an opinion, that poverty was disgraceful; and was very severe in his censures of œconomy in both our universities, which exacted at meals the attendance of poor scholars, under the several denominations of servitors in the one, and sizars in the other<sup>2</sup>: he thought that the scholar's, like the christian life, levelled all distinctions of rank and worldly pre-eminence. (Page 18.)

Upon his leaving the university, he went home to the house of his father, which he found so nearly filled with his relations, that is to say, the maiden sisters of his mother and cousin Cornelius Ford, whom his father, on the decease of their brother in the summer of 1731<sup>3</sup>, had taken in to board, that it would scarce receive him. (Page 19.)

Cave was so incompetent a judge of Johnson's abilities, that, meaning at one time to dazzle him with the splendour of some of those luminaries in literature who favoured him with their correspondence, he told him that, if he would, in the evening, be at a certain alehouse in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell, he might have a chance of seeing Mr. Browne<sup>4</sup> and another or two of the persons mentioned in the preceding note: Johnson

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 39, 48.

Lockhart gives the following instance of Scott's memory. 'Lord Corehouse repeating a phrase, remarkable only for its absurdity, from a Magazine poem of the very silliest feebleness, which they had laughed at when at College together [nearly forty years earlier,] Scott began at the beginning, and gave it us to the end, with apparently no more effort than if he himself had composed it the day before.' Lockhart's *Scott*, ed. 1839, vii. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Servitors in Oxford, sizars in Cambridge. In the manse at Calder, where Johnson visited Lord Mac-

aulay's great uncle, 'he gave an account of the education at Oxford in all its gradations. The advantage of being a servitor to a youth of little fortune struck Mrs. Macaulay much.' *Life*, v. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Ford died in 1731; Cornelius Ford in 1734. *Notes and Queries*, 5th S. xiii. 250. Johnson left Oxford in 1729.

<sup>4</sup> Moses Browne, 'originally a pen-cutter, was, so far as concerned the poetical part of it, the chief support of the Gentleman's Magazine, which he fed with many a nourishing morsel.' *Hawkins*, p. 46 n.

He became a clergyman and was accepted

accepted the invitation ; and being introduced by Cave, dressed in a loose horseman's coat, and such a great bushy uncombed wig as he constantly wore<sup>1</sup>, to the sight of Mr. Browne, whom he found sitting at the upper end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, had his curiosity gratified.

Johnson saw very clearly those offensive particulars that made a part of Cave's character ; but, as he was one of the most quick-sighted men I ever knew in discovering the good and amiable qualities of others, a faculty which he has displayed, as well in the life of Cave, as in that of Savage, printed among his works, so was he ever inclined to palliate their defects ; and, though he was above courting the patronage of a man, whom, in respect of his mental endowments he considered as his inferior, he disdained not to accept it, when tendered with any degree of complacency.

And this was the general tenor of Johnson's behaviour ; for, though his character through life was marked with a roughness that approached to ferocity, it was in the power of almost every one to charm him into mildness, and to render him gentle and placid, and even courteous, by such a patient and respectful attention as is due to every one, who, in his discourse, signifies a desire either to instruct or delight. Bred to no profession, without relations, friends, or interest, Johnson was an adventurer in the wide world, and had his fortunes to make : the arts of insinuation and address were, in his opinion, too slow in their operation to answer his purpose ; and, he rather chose to display his parts to all the world, at the risk of being thought arrogant, than to wait for the assistance of such friends as he could make, or the patronage of some individual that had power or influence, and who might have the kindness to take him by the hand, and lift him into notice. With all that asperity of manners

Vicar of Olney twenty-four years. He was born in 1704 and died in 1787. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1787, p. 932.

'I remember,' writes Cowper, 'hearing Moses Browne say, that when he had only two or three children, he

thought he should have been distracted ; but when he had ten or a dozen he was perfectly easy, and thought no more about the matter.' Cowper's *Works*, ed. 1836, iv. 154.

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins, *post*, p. 103, describes this wig.

with

with which he has been charged, and which kept at a distance many, who, to my knowledge, would have been glad of an intimacy with him, he possessed the affections of pity and compassion in a most eminent degree. In a mixed company, of which I was one, the conversation turned on the pestilence which raged in London, in the year 1665, and gave occasion to Johnson to speak of Dr. Nathanael Hodges, who, in the height of that calamity, continued in the city, and was almost the only one of his profession that had the courage to oppose the endeavours of his art to the spreading of the contagion. It was the hard fate of this person, a short time after, to die a prisoner for debt, in Ludgate: Johnson related this circumstance to us, with the tears ready to start from his eyes; and, with great energy said, 'Such a man would not have been suffered to perish in these times'. (Page 49.)

Johnson was never greedy of money, but without money could not be stimulated to write. I have been told by a clergyman of some eminence with whom he had been long acquainted, that, being to preach on a particular occasion, he applied, as others under a like necessity had frequently done, to Johnson for help. 'I will write a sermon for thee,' said Johnson, 'but thou must pay me for it'. (Page 84.)

<sup>1</sup> De Foe mentions him in a passage, where, speaking of the quacks, he says:—'their doors were more thronged than those of . . . Dr. Hodges, or any, though the most famous men of the time.' De Foe's *Works*, v. 25. On p. 192 he says:—'Great was the reproach thrown upon those physicians who left their patients during the sickness; and now they came to town again; nobody cared to employ them; they were called deserters, and frequently bills were set up on their doors, and written, Here is a doctor to be let!'

'In recognition of Dr. Hodges's services to the citizens during the plague, the authorities of the City granted him a stipend as their au-

thorised physician. . . . He became poor, was imprisoned in Ludgate for debt, and there died June 10, 1688.' His book on the plague, which Dr. Quincy translated in 1720, 'shows him to have been an excellent observer both as to symptoms and the results of treatment.' DR. NORMAN MOORE in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.* xxvii. 60.

<sup>2</sup> 'No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money.' *Life*, iii. 19.

Strahan wrote to Hume on April 9, 1774:—'If your commendations of Henry's *History* are well founded, is not his work an exception to your own general rule, that no good book was ever wrote for money?' *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. 285.

In

In contradiction to those, who, having a wife and children, prefer domestic enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, that a tavern-chair was the throne of human felicity<sup>1</sup>.—‘As soon,’ said he, ‘as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude<sup>2</sup>: when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and

‘We who write, if we want the talent, yet have the excuse that we do it for a poor subsistence; but what can be urged in their defence, who not having the vocation of poverty to scribble, out of meer wantonness take pains to make themselves ridiculous.’ Dryden’s Preface to *All for Love*.

Johnson says of Addison:—‘I have heard that his avidity did not satisfy itself with the air of renown, but that with great eagerness he laid hold on his proportion of the profits.’ *Works*, vii. 437. See also *ante*, ii. 14, and *post*, p. 107.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 70.

<sup>2</sup> ‘It is worthy of remark by those who are curious in observing customs and modes of living, how little these houses of entertainment are now frequented, and what a diminution in their number has been experienced in London and Westminster in a period of about forty years backward. . . . When the frenzy of the times was abated [after the Restoration], taverns, especially those about the Exchange, became places for the transaction of almost all manner of business: there accounts were settled, conveyances executed, and there attorneys sat, as at inns in the country on market days, to receive their clients. In that space near the Royal Exchange which is encompassed by Lombard, Gracechurch, part of Bishop’s-gate and Threadneedle streets, the number of taverns was not so few as twenty, and on the site of the Bank there stood four. At the Crown, which

was one of them, it was not unusual in a morning to draw a butt of mountain, a hundred and twenty gallons, in gills.’ *Note by Hawkins*.

In the Old Cheshire Cheese, that ancient Fleet Street tavern which looks now as it may have looked in Johnson’s day, his seat is marked by an inscription. In no contemporary writer is mention made of his frequenting the tavern. Cyrus Jay, in 1868, dedicated his book *The Law*: ‘To the Lawyers and Gentlemen with whom I have dined for more than half a century at the Old Cheshire Cheese, Wine Office Court, Fleet Street.’ In the Preface he says:—‘During the fifty-three years I have frequented the Cheshire Cheese there have been only three landlords. When I first visited it I used to meet several old gentlemen who remembered Dr. Johnson nightly at the Cheshire Cheese; and they have told me, what is not generally known, that the Doctor, whilst living in the Temple, always went to the Mitre or the Essex Head; but when he removed to Gough Square or Bolt Court he was a constant visitor at the Cheshire Cheese, because nothing but a hurricane would have induced him to cross Fleet Street.’

There is much loose talk in this. It is not likely that many, if indeed any, of the old gentlemen remembered Johnson in Gough Square, for he left it in 1759. It was moreover a year later that he removed to the Temple. Boswell too records many  
the

the servants obsequious to my call; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants: wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight<sup>1</sup>. (Page 87.)

The debates penned by Johnson were not only more methodical and better connected than those of Guthrie<sup>2</sup>, but in all the ornaments of style superior: they were written at those seasons when he was able to raise his imagination to such a pitch of fervour as bordered upon enthusiasm, which, that he might the better do, his practice was to shut himself up in a room assigned him at St. John's gate, to which he would not suffer any one to approach, except the compositor or Cave's boy for matter, which, as fast as he composed it, he tumbled out at the door<sup>3</sup>. (Page 99.)

His discourse, which through life was of the didactic kind, was replete with original sentiments expressed in the strongest and most correct terms, and in such language, that whoever could have heard and not seen him would have thought him reading<sup>4</sup>. For the pleasure he communicated to his hearers he expected not the tribute of silence: on the contrary he encouraged others, particularly young men, to speak, and paid a due attention to what they said<sup>5</sup>; but his prejudices were so strong and deeply rooted, more especially against Scotchmen<sup>6</sup> and Whigs, that whoever thwarted him ran the risque of a severe rebuke, or at

dinners at the Mitre after he had removed to the other side of Fleet Street. Nevertheless we may take the account as direct evidence of what could scarcely be doubtful that Johnson often dined in the tavern.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Boswell. *Life*, ii. 452.

When I had the honour of meeting Mr. Gladstone at Oxford on Feb. 6, 1890, he quoted this passage in his strong, deep voice, with deliberate utterance, and praised it highly.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 116.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* iv. 408.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* i. 204; iv. 183; *post* in Reynolds's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, speaking of himself, said:—'No man is so cautious not to interrupt another; no man thinks it so necessary to appear attentive when others are speaking.' *Ante*, i. 169.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 429; *Life*, ii. 77, 121, 306; iv. 169.

best

best became entangled in an unpleasant altercation<sup>1</sup>. He was scarce settled in town before this dogmatical behaviour, and his impatience of contradiction, became a part of his character, and deterred many persons of learning, who wished to enjoy the delight of his conversation, from seeking his acquaintance. There were not wanting those among his friends who would sometimes hint to him, that the conditions of free conversation imply an equality among those engaged in it, which are violated whenever superiority is assumed<sup>2</sup>: their reproofs he took kindly, and would in excuse for what they called the pride of learning, say, that it was of the defensive kind<sup>3</sup>. The repetition of these had, however, a great effect on him; they abated his prejudices, and produced a change in his temper and manners that rendered him at length a desirable companion in the most polite circles.

In the lesser duties of morality he was remiss: he slept when he should have studied, and watched when he should have been at rest: his habits were slovenly, and the neglect of his person and garb so great as to render his appearance disgusting<sup>4</sup>. He was an ill husband of his time, and so regardless of the hours of refection, that at two he might be found at breakfast, and at dinner at eight<sup>5</sup>. In his studies, and I may add, in his

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig.' *Life*, ii. 170. See also *ib.* v. 255.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sir, (said Goldsmith,) you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic.' *ib.* ii. 257.

<sup>3</sup> They borrowed this from Johnson. "Sir, (said Johnson) that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man this day existing."—"No, (said Dr. Adams) there is one person, at least, as proud; I think, by your own account, you are the prouder man of the two."—"But mine (replied Johnson instantly) was defensive pride." *ib.* i. 265.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 396. For the improvement which took place, see *ib.* iii. 325; *ante*, i. 241, and *Letters*, i. 322; ii. 39.

<sup>5</sup> In 1760 the dinner-hour in most

Oxford Colleges was 12.30; in some as early as 11. Bentham's *Works*, x. 61. At Sir Joshua Reynolds's 'dinner was served precisely at five, whether all the company had arrived or not.' Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 384.

Horace Walpole wrote on Feb. 6, 1777 (*Letters*, vi. 410): 'Everything is changed; as always must happen when one grows old, and is prejudiced to one's old ways. I do not like dining at nearly six, nor beginning the evening at ten at night.'

When a few years ago the Prince of Wales asked General Gordon, soon after his return from the Soudan, to dine with him, the general replied, that he was sorry he could not accept the invitation, as at the hour named he was always in bed.

devotional exercises, he was both intense and remiss<sup>1</sup>, and in the prosecution of his literary employments, dilatory and hasty, unwilling, as himself confessed, to work, and working with vigour and haste<sup>2</sup>.

His indolence, or rather the delight he took in reading and reflection, rendered him averse to bodily exertions. He was ill made for riding, and took so little pleasure in it, that, as he once told me, he has fallen asleep on his horse<sup>3</sup>. Walking he seldom practised, perhaps for no better reason, than that it required the previous labour of dressing. In a word, mental occupation was his sole pleasure, and the knowledge he acquired in the pursuit of it he was ever ready to communicate: in which faculty he was not only excellent but expert; for, as it is related of lord Bacon by one who knew him<sup>4</sup>, that 'in all companies he appeared a good proficient, if not a master, in those arts entertained for the subject of every one's discourse,' and that 'his most casual talk deserved to be written,' so it may be said of Johnson, that his conversation was ever suited to the profession, condition, and capacity of those with whom he talked<sup>5</sup>. (Page 164.)

Johnson, who before this time [1748 or 1749], together with his wife, had lived in obscurity, lodging at different houses in the courts and alleys in and about the Strand and Fleet street<sup>6</sup>, had, for the purpose of carrying on this arduous work [the *Dictionary*], and being near the printers employed in it, taken a handsome house in Gough square<sup>7</sup>, and fitted up a room in it with desks and other accommodations for amanuenses, who, to the number of five or six, he kept constantly under his eye.

<sup>1</sup> For his attendance at church, see *ante*, i. 63, 81; *Life*, i. 67; iii. 401.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 96.

<sup>3</sup> For his fox-hunting, see *ante*, i. 288.

<sup>4</sup> Works of Francis Osborn, Esq.; 8vo, 1673, p. 151. *Note by Hawkins*.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iii. 337.

<sup>6</sup> Also in Holborn. For the list of his habitations, see *ib.* iii. 405.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* i. 188; *Letters*, i. 18. It was in No. 17 that he lived.

'There is no city in Europe, I believe, in which house-rent is dearer than in London, and yet I know no capital in which a furnished apartment can be hired so cheap.' *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. I. ch. 10, ed. 1811, i. 161.

An interleaved copy of Bailey's dictionary<sup>1</sup> in folio he made the repository of the several articles, and these he collected by incessant reading the best authors in our language, in the practice whereof, his method was to score with a black-lead pencil the words by him selected, and give them over to his assistants to insert in their places<sup>2</sup>. The books he used for this purpose were what he had in his own collection, a copious but a miserably ragged one, and all such as he could borrow; which latter, if ever they came back to those that lent them, were so defaced as to be scarce worth owning, and yet, some of his friends were glad to receive and entertain them as curiosities<sup>3</sup>. (Page 175.)

Further to appease Johnson Lord Chesterfield sent two persons, the one a specious but empty man, Sir Thomas Robinson, more distinguished by the tallness of his person than for any estimable qualities<sup>4</sup>; the other an eminent painter now living. These

<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Bailey published his English Dictionary in 1721.

<sup>2</sup> "What objection can you have to the young gentleman?" says Mrs. Western.

<sup>3</sup> "A very solid objection, in my opinion," says Sophia—"I hate him."

<sup>4</sup> "Will you never learn a proper use of words?" answered the aunt. "Indeed, child, you should consult Bailey's Dictionary." *Tom Jones*, Bk. vii. ch. 3.

Dr. Murray, in the *New Eng. Dict.* under *Belace* says that this word 'is found only in Dictionaries. It appeared first in Bailey's folio, 1730, was retained by Dr. Johnson (who used a copy of that as the basis of his work), and from him it has been perpetuated by later dictionaries.' Johnson omitted the word in his *Abridgment*.

<sup>2</sup> *Post* in Percy's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 188.

Mr. Talbot Baines Reid showed me a small sheet of paper in Johnson's hand in which quotations had been written such as the following:—

'But some untaught o'erhear the  
whisp'ring rill,  
In spite of sacred leisure *block-*  
*heads* still.'

YOUNG [*Satire* i., *Works*, ed. 1813, ii. 87].

'His well-breath'd *beagles* sweep  
along the plain.'

YOUNG [*Ib.* p. 88].

'A gipsy you commit  
'And shake the clumsy *bench* with  
country wit.'

YOUNG [*Ib.*].

'Beauty is no *bar* to sense.'

YOUNG [*Satire* v., ii. 126].

These passages are not quoted in the *Dictionary* under the words underlined by Johnson.

<sup>4</sup> 'This person, who is now at rest in Westminster-abbey, was, when living, distinguished by the name of long Sir Thomas Robinson. He was a man of the world or rather of the town, and a great pest to persons of high rank or in office. He was very troublesome to the earl of Burlington, and when in his visits to him he was told that his lordship was gone out, were



were instructed to apologize for his lordship's treatment of him, and to make him tenders of his future friendship and patronage. Sir Thomas, whose talent was flattery, was profuse in his commendations of Johnson and his writings, and declared that were his circumstances other than they were, himself would settle five hundred pounds a year on him. 'And who are you,' asked Johnson, 'that talk thus liberally?' 'I am,' said the other, 'Sir Thomas Robinson, a Yorkshire baronet.' 'Sir,' replied Johnson, 'if the first peer of the realm were to make me such an offer, I would shew him the way down stairs'. (Page 191.)

In these disputations [at the Ivy Lane Club<sup>1</sup>] I had opportunities of observing what others have taken occasion to remark, viz. not only that in conversation Johnson made it a rule to talk his best<sup>2</sup>, but that on many subjects he was not uniform in his opinions, contending as often for victory as for truth<sup>3</sup>: at one time *good*, at another *evil* was predominant in the moral constitution of the world. Upon one occasion, he would deplore the non-observance of Good-Friday, and on another deny, that among us of the present age there is any decline of public worship<sup>5</sup>. He would sometimes contradict self-evident pro-

would desire to be admitted to look at the clock, or to play with a monkey that was kept in the hall, in hopes of being sent for in to the earl. This he had so frequently done, that all in the house were tired of him. At length it was concerted among the servants that he should receive a summary answer to his usual questions, and accordingly at his next coming, the porter as soon as he had opened the gate and without waiting for what he had to say, dismissed him with these words, "Sir, his lordship is gone out, the clock stands, and the monkey is dead." *Note by Hawkins.*

For the Earl of Burlington, see *Life*, iii. 347; iv. 50, n. 4.

<sup>1</sup> He visited Johnson after this, for in 1763 Boswell found him sitting

with him. *Life*, i. 434. Dr. Maxwell recorded how Johnson once told the Baronet that 'he talked the language of a savage.' *Ib.* ii. 130.

Horace Walpole describes Robinson as 'one of those men of temporary fame who are universally known in their own age, and rarely by any other age. He was an indiscriminate flatterer.' *Philobiblon*, x. iv. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 388. <sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 183.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* ii. 238; iv. 111; *ante*, i. 452.

<sup>5</sup> 'BOSWELL. "Is there not less religion in the nation now, Sir, than there was formerly?" JOHNSON. "I don't know, Sir, that there is." *Life*, ii. 96. 'He lamented that all serious and religious conversation was banished from the society of men.' *Ib.* ii. 124.

'I remarked, that one disadvantage positions

positions, such as, that the luxury of this country has increased with its riches<sup>1</sup> and that the practice of card-playing is more general than heretofore<sup>2</sup>. At this versatility of temper, none, however, took offence; as Alexander and Cæsar were born for conquest, so was Johnson for the office of a symposiarch<sup>3</sup>, to preside in all conversations; and I never yet saw the man who would venture to contest his right<sup>4</sup>.

Let it not, however, be imagined, that the members of this our club met together, with the temper of gladiators, or that there was wanting among us a disposition to yield to each other in all diversities of opinion: and indeed, disputation was not, as in many associations of this kind, the purpose of our meeting: nor were our conversations, like those of the Rota club<sup>5</sup>, restrained to particular topics. On the contrary, it may be said, that with our gravest discourses was intermingled

‘Mirth, that after no repenting draws,’

MILTON (Sonnet to Cyriac Skinner),

for not only in Johnson's melancholy there were lucid intervals<sup>6</sup>,

arising from the immensity of London, was, that nobody was heeded by his neighbour; there was no fear of censure for not observing Good Friday, as it ought to be kept, and as it is kept in country-towns. He said, it was, upon the whole, very well observed even in London.’ *Life*, ii. 356.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson always opposed attacks on luxury. To suppose that it corrupts a people and destroys the spirit of liberty was ‘all visionary.’ *Ib.* ii. 170. ‘No nation was ever hurt by it, for it can reach but to a very few.’ *Ib.* ii. 218. ‘It produces much good.’ *Ib.* iii. 56. ‘He laughed at querulous declamations against the age on account of luxury.’ *Ib.* iii. 226. ‘Depend upon it, Sir, every state of society is as luxurious as it can be.’ *Ib.* iii. 282. ‘Man is not diminished in size by it.’ *Ib.* v. 358.

Luxury, which in most parts of life by being well-balanced and dif-

fused, is only decency and convenience, has perhaps as many, or more, good than evil consequences attending it. It certainly excites industry, nourishes emulation, and inspires some sense of personal value into all ranks of people.’ *Burke's Works*, ed. 1808, ii. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Symposiarch* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, ii. 93, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Hawkins, I suppose, refers to the Rota Club in which James Harington, ‘with a few associates as fanatical as himself, used to meet, with all the gravity of political importance, to settle an equal government by rotation.’ Johnson's *Works*, vii. 95. They met in New Palace Yard, Westminster. Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, ii. 321.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters*, ii. 377, n. 1.

but he was a great contributor to the mirth of conversation, by the many witty sayings he uttered, and the many excellent stories which his memory had treasured up, and he would on occasion relate; so that those are greatly mistaken who infer, either from the general tendency of his writings, or that appearance of hebetude which marked his countenance when living, and is discernible in the pictures and prints of him, that he could only reason and discuss, dictate and controul.

In the talent of humour there hardly ever was his equal<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 452. The following extract is from a letter which I received from the late Master of Balliol College, dated West Malvern, Dec. 30, 1883:—

‘It is a curious question whether Boswell has unconsciously misrepresented Johnson in any respect. I think, judging from the materials which are supplied chiefly by himself, that in one respect he has:—He has represented him more as a sage and philosopher in his conduct as well as his conversation than he really was, and less as a rollicking “King of Society.” The gravity of Johnson’s own writings tends to confirm this, as, I suspect, erroneous impression. His religion was fitful and intermittent, and when once the ice was broken he enjoyed Jack Wilkes, though he refused to shake hands with Hume. I was much struck by a remark of Sir John Hawkins (excuse me if I have mentioned this to you before), “He was the most humorous man I ever knew.” . . . I shall be most happy to talk about the subject when you return to England; *ἔμοι περὶ Σωκράτους εἰπεῖν τε καὶ ἀκούσαι ἀεὶ ἡδιστον.*’

Though Boswell does not fully bring out in his narrative this humorous side of Johnson, yet in the character which he draws of him at the end of the *Life* he does not pass it over. ‘Though usually grave, and

even awful in his deportment, he possessed uncommon and peculiar powers of wit and humour; he frequently indulged himself in colloquial pleasantry; and the heartiest merriment was often enjoyed in his company.’ *Life*, iv. 428.

Boswell asked Miss Burney to give him material ‘to shew Johnson in a new light. Grave Sam, and great Sam, and solemn Sam, and learned Sam—all these he has appeared over and over. I want to show him as gay Sam, agreeable Sam, pleasant Sam.’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, v. 167. It is in her *Diary* that he is thus best shown. It abounds in such passages as the following:—

‘At night, Mrs. Thrale asked if I would have anything? I answered, “No;” but Dr. Johnson said,

“Yes: she is used, madam, to suppers; she would like an egg or two, and a few slices of ham, or a rasher—a rasher, I believe, would please her better.”

‘How ridiculous! However, nothing could persuade Mrs. Thrale not to have the cloth laid: and Dr. Johnson was so facetious, that he challenged Mr. Thrale to get drunk!

“I wish,” said he, “my master would say to me, Johnson, if you will oblige me, you will call for a bottle of Toulon, and then we will set to it, glass for glass, till it is done; and except

except perhaps among the old comedians, such as Tarleton, and a few others mentioned by Cibber. By means of this he was enabled to give to any relation that required it, the graces and aids of expression, and to discriminate with the nicest exactness the characters of those whom it concerned. In aping this faculty I have seen Warburton disconcerted, and when he would fain have been thought a man of pleasantry, not a little out of countenance. (Page 257.)

To return to Johnson, I have already said that he paid no regard to time or the stated hours of refection, or even rest; and of this his inattention I will here relate a notable instance. Mrs. Lenox, a lady now well known in the literary world, had written a novel intitled, 'The life of Harriot Stuart,' which in the spring of 1751 was ready for publication<sup>1</sup>. One evening at the club, Johnson proposed to us the celebrating the birth of Mrs. Lenox's first literary child, as he called her book, by a whole night spent in festivity. Upon his mentioning it to me, I told him I had never sat up a whole night in my life; but he continuing to press me, and saying, that I should find great delight in it, I, as did all the rest of our company, consented. The place appointed was the Devil tavern<sup>2</sup>, and there, about

after that, I will say, Thrale, if you will oblige me, you will call for another bottle of Toulon, and then we will set to it, glass for glass, till that is done: and by the time we should have drunk the two bottles, we should be so happy, and such good friends, that we should fly into each other's arms, and both together call for the third!" Vol. i. p. 75.

<sup>1</sup> 'These volumes contain a series of love-affairs from 11 years of age, attended with a number of her adventures and misfortunes, which were borne with the patience, and are penn'd with the purity of a Clarissa.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, December, 1750, p. 575.

Horace Walpole, writing two years earlier, describes her as 'a poetess

and deplorable actress.' *Letters*, ii. 126. Johnson, in a letter dated Dec. 10, 1751, speaks of 'our Charlotte's book.' *Letters*, i. 26. For Miss Burney's criticism of the extravagant praise he bestowed on Mrs. Lennox, see *ante*, i. 102, n. 4.

Mrs. Lennox was the daughter of Colonel James Ramsay, Lieutenant-Governor of New York. 'She died in distress' in 1804, at the age of eighty-three, 'in Dean's Yard, Westminster, and lies buried with the common soldiery in the further burying-ground of Broad Chapel.' Nichols's *Lit. Anec.* iii. 435.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 254, n. 4.

'Near Temple Bar is the Devil Tavern, so called from its sign of St. Dunstan seizing the evil spirit by

the hour of eight, Mrs. Lenox and her husband, and a lady of her acquaintance, now living, as also the [Ivy Lane] club, and friends to the number of near twenty, assembled. Our supper was elegant, and Johnson had directed that a magnificent hot apple-pye should make a part of it<sup>1</sup>, and this he would have stuck with bay-leaves, because, forsooth, Mrs. Lenox was an authoress, and had written verses; and further, he had prepared for her a crown of laurel, with which, but not till he had invoked the muses by some ceremonies of his own invention, he encircled her brows. The night passed, as must be imagined, in pleasant conversation, and harmless mirth, intermingled at different periods with the refreshments of coffee and tea. About five, Johnson's face shone with meridian splendour, though his drink had been only lemonade<sup>2</sup>; but the far greater part of us had deserted the colours of Bacchus, and were with difficulty rallied to partake of a second refreshment of coffee, which was scarcely ended when the day began to dawn. This phenomenon began to put us in mind of our reckoning<sup>3</sup>; but the waiters were all so overcome with sleep, that it was two hours before we could get a bill, and it was not till near eight that the creaking of the street-door gave the signal for our departure.

My mirth had been considerably abated by a severe fit of the tooth-ach, which had troubled me the greater part of the night, and which Bathurst<sup>4</sup> endeavoured to alleviate by all the topical remedies and palliatives he could think of; and I well remember, at the instant of my going out of the tavern-door, the sensation of shame that effected me, occasioned not by reflection on any thing

the nose with a pair of hot tongs. Opposite to this noted house is Chancery Lane.' Pennant's *London*, 1790, p. 154.

<sup>1</sup> In memory of this festal night an apple-pie forms part of the suppers of the Johnson Club at its meetings in one of the Fleet Street taverns.

<sup>2</sup> 'He was angry with me (Boswell writes) for proposing to carry lemons with us to Sky, that he might be sure to have his lemonade. "Sir, (said he) I do not wish to be thought

that feeble man who cannot do without any thing.'" *Life*, v. 72.

<sup>3</sup> To Hawkins the reckoning must have been peculiarly painful. Of him Dr. Burney records as regards the Literary Club:—"The Knight having refused to pay his portion of the reckoning for supper, because he usually ate no supper at home, Johnson observed, "Sir John, Sir, is a very *unclubable* man.'" *Life*, i. 480, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 390.

evil

evil that had passed in the course of the night's entertainment, but on the resemblance it bore to a debauch. However, a few turns in the Temple, and a breakfast at a neighbouring coffee-house enabled me to overcome it. (Page 285.)

Those who were best acquainted with them both [Johnson and his wife] wondered that Johnson could derive no comfort [on her death] from the usual resources, reflections on the conditions of mortality, the instability of human happiness, resignation to the divine will, and other topics<sup>1</sup>; and the more, when they considered, that their marriage was not one of those which inconsiderate young people call love-matches, and that she was more than old enough to be his mother<sup>2</sup>; that, as their union had not been productive of children, the medium of a new relation between them was wanting; that her inattention to some, at least, of the duties of a wife, were [*sic*] evident in the person of her husband, whose negligence of dress seemed never to have received the least correction from her, and who, in the sordidness of his apparel, and the complexion of his linen, even shamed her<sup>3</sup>. For these reasons I have often been inclined to think, that if this fondness of Johnson for his wife was not dissembled, it was a lesson that he had learned by rote<sup>4</sup>, and that, when he practised it, he knew not where to stop till he became ridiculous. It is true, he has celebrated her person in the word *formosa*, which he caused to be inscribed on her grave-stone<sup>5</sup>; but could he, with that imperfection in his sight which made him say, in the words of Milton, he never saw

<sup>1</sup> 'Those common-place topics which have never dried a single tear.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, i. 400.

Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale on the death of her husband:—'I do not exhort you to reason yourself into tranquillity. We must first pray, and then labour; first implore the blessing of God, and [then employ] those means which he puts into our hands. Cultivated ground has few weeds; a mind occupied by lawful business

has little room for useless regret.' *Letters*, ii. 210.

<sup>2</sup> She was forty-six, he two months short of twenty-six. *Life*, i. 95, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> For her 'particular reverence for cleanliness,' see *ante*, i. 247.

<sup>4</sup> Boswell 'cannot conceive' why Hawkins should make this assertion, 'unless it proceeded from a want of similar feelings in his own breast.' *Life*, i. 234.

<sup>5</sup> 'Formosae, cultae, ingeniosae, piaae.' *Ib.* i. 241, n. 2. See *ante*, i. 248.

the

the human face divine<sup>1</sup>, have been a witness to her beauty? which we may suppose had sustained some loss before he married; her daughter by her former husband being but little younger than Johnson himself. As, during her lifetime, he invited but few of his friends to his house, I never saw her, but I have been told by Mr. Garrick<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Hawkesworth, and others, that there was somewhat crazy in the behaviour of them both; profound respect on his part, and the airs of an antiquated beauty on her's. Johnson had not then been used to the company of women<sup>3</sup>, and nothing but his conversation rendered him tolerable among them: it was, therefore, necessary that he should practise his best manners to one, whom, as she was descended from an antient family<sup>4</sup>, and had brought him a fortune<sup>5</sup>, he thought his superior. This, after all, must be said, that he laboured to raise his opinion of her to the highest, by inserting in many of her books of devotion that I have seen, such endearing memorials as these: 'This was dear Tetty's book.'—'This was a prayer which dear Tetty was accustomed to say,' not to mention his frequent recollection of her in his meditations, and the singularity of his prayers respecting her<sup>6</sup>.

To so high a pitch had he worked his remembrance of her, that he requested a divine, of his acquaintance<sup>7</sup>, to preach a sermon at her interment, written by himself, but was dissuaded from so ostentatious a display of the virtues of a woman, who, though she was his wife, was but little known. (Page 313.)

Of the beauties of painting, notwithstanding the many eulogiums on that art which, after the commencement of his friendship with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Johnson inserted in his writings, he had not the least conception; and this leads me to mention a fact to the purpose, which I well remember. One

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, iii. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 248.

<sup>3</sup> See *Life*, i. 82, for his intimacy with some of the first families in and near Lichfield.

<sup>4</sup> On her tombstone he describes her as 'Antiqua Jarvisiorum gente,

Peatlingae, apud Leicestrienses, ortae.' *Life*, i. 241, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> She is said to have brought him about seven or eight hundred pounds. *Ib.* i. 95, n. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 14.  
<sup>7</sup> Dr. Taylor. *Ante*, i. 476; *Life*, i. 241.

evening

evening at the club, I came in with a small roll of prints, which, in the afternoon, I had picked up: I think they were landscapes of Perelle<sup>1</sup>, and laying it down with my hat, Johnson's curiosity prompted him to take it up and unroll it; he viewed the prints severally with great attention, and asked me what sort of pleasure such things could afford me; I told him, that as representations of nature, containing an assemblage of such particulars as render rural scenes delightful, they presented to my mind the objects themselves, and that my imagination realised the prospect before me; he said, that was more than his would do, for that in his whole life he was never capable of discerning the least resemblance of any kind between a picture and the subject it was intended to represent<sup>2</sup>.

To the delights of music, he was equally insensible: neither voice nor instrument, nor the harmony of concordant sounds, had power over his affections, or even to engage his attention. Of music in general, he has been heard to say, 'it excites in my mind no ideas, and hinders me from contemplating my own;' and of a fine singer, or instrumental performer, that 'he had the merit of a Canary-bird<sup>3</sup>.' (Page 318.)

The uses for which Francis Barber was intended to serve his master were not very apparent, for Diogenes himself never wanted a servant less than he seemed to do<sup>4</sup>: the great bushy wig, which throughout his life he affected to wear, by that closeness of texture which it had contracted and been suffered to retain, was ever nearly as impenetrable by a comb as a quickset

<sup>1</sup> There were in the seventeenth century three French engravers of the name of Perelle or Perrelle, a father and two sons. *Nouv. Biog. Gén.*

<sup>2</sup> This was an exaggeration on the part of either Johnson or Hawkins. *Life*, i. 363, n. 3. See also *ante*, i. 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 409.

<sup>4</sup> Pope was so very insensible to the charms of music that he once asked Dr. Arbuthnot, whether the

rapture which the company expressed upon hearing the compositions and performance of Handel did not proceed wholly from affectation.' Warton's *Pope's Works*, v. 235 n.

<sup>5</sup> Newton, hearing Handel play on the harpsichord, could find nothing worthy to remark but the elasticity of his fingers. At another time, being asked his opinion of poetry, he quoted a sentiment of Barrow, that it was ingenious nonsense.' *Ib.* iii. 176 n.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 329.



hedge; and little of the dust that had once settled on his outer garments was ever known to have been disturbed by the brush<sup>1</sup>. (Page 327.)

The proposal for the Dictionary, and other of his writings, had exhibited Johnson to view in the character of a poet and a philologist: to his moral qualities, and his concern for the interests of religion and virtue, the world were for some time strangers; but no sooner were these manifested by the publication of the Rambler and the Adventurer, than he was looked up to as a master of human life, a practical Christian and a divine; his acquaintance was sought by persons of the first eminence in literature; and his house, in respect of the conversations there, became an academy<sup>2</sup>. One person, in particular, who seems, for a great part of his life, to have affected the character of a patron of learned and ingenious men, in a letter which I have seen, made him a tender of his friendship in terms to this effect:—‘That having perused many of his writings, and thence conceived a high opinion of his learning, his genius, and moral qualities, if Mr. Johnson was inclined to enlarge the circle of his acquaintance, he [the letter-writer] should be glad to be admitted into the number of his friends, and to receive a visit from him.’—This person was Mr. Dodington, afterwards lord Melcombe, the value and honour of whose patronage, to speak the truth, may in some degree be estimated by his diary lately published<sup>3</sup>. How Johnson received this

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Burney, writing in 1777 or 1778, says:—‘Dr. Johnson was immensely *smart*, for *him*—for he had not only a very decent tidy suit of cloathes on, but his hands, face, and linen were clean, and he treated us with his *worsted wig*, which Mr. Thrale made him a present of, because it scarce ever gets out of curl, and he generally diverts himself with laying [*sic*] down just after he has got a fresh wig on.’ *Early Diary of F. Burney*, ii. 287.

<sup>2</sup> Hume, in 1767, complained that

‘men of letters have here [in London] no place of rendezvous; and are, indeed, sunk and forgotten in the general torrent of the world.’ Burton’s *Hume*, ii. 385. For Johnson’s ‘levee’ see *ante*, i. 414; *Life*, ii. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Horace Walpole wrote on June 3, 1784 (*Letters*, viii. 479):—‘A nephew of Lord Melcombe’s heir has published that Lord’s *Diary*. Though drawn by his own hand, and certainly meant to flatter himself, it is a truer portrait than any of his hirelings would have given. Never was such invitation

invitation, I know not : as it was conveyed in very handsome expressions, it required some apology for declining it, and I cannot but think he framed one. (Page 328.)

Invitations to dine with such of those as he liked, he so seldom declined, that to a friend of his, he said, ' I never but once, upon a resolution to employ myself in study, balked ' an invitation out to dinner, and then I stayed at home and did nothing <sup>2</sup>. ' (Page 341.)

Johnson looked upon eating as a very serious business, and enjoyed the pleasure of a splendid table equally with most men. It was, at no time of his life, pleasing to see him at a meal ; the greediness with which he ate, his total inattention to those among whom he was seated, and his profound silence in the hour of refection, were circumstances that at the instant degraded him, and shewed him to be more a sensualist than a philosopher <sup>3</sup>. Moreover, he was a lover of tea to an excess hardly credible ; whenever it appeared, he was almost raving, and by his impatience to be served, his incessant calls for those ingredients which make that liquor palatable, and the haste with which he swallowed it down, he seldom failed to make that a fatigue to every one else <sup>4</sup>, which was intended as a general

a composition of vanity, versatility, and servility. In short, there is but one feature wanting—his wit, of which in his whole book there are not three sallies. I often said of Lord Hervey and Dodington, that they were the only two I ever knew who were always aiming at wit, and yet generally found it.'

<sup>1</sup> Johnson gives as the third meaning of *balk* 'to omit, or refuse anything.' Hawkins uses it *post*, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> ' I fancy,' writes Dr. Maxwell, ' he must have read and wrote chiefly in the night, for I can scarcely recollect that he ever refused going with me to a tavern.' *Life*, ii. 119. For the hours at which he wrote see *post* in Steevens's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>3</sup> Percy remarks on the passage in the *Life* (i. 468) where Boswell describes Johnson's voracious eating :— ' This is extremely exaggerated. He ate heartily, having a good appetite, but not with the voraciousness described by Mr. Boswell ; all whose extravagant accounts must be read with caution and abatement.' Anderson's *Johnson*, ed. 1815, p. 471.

<sup>4</sup> In John Knox's *Tour through the Highlands*, ed. 1787, p. 143, it is stated that at Dunvegan ' Lady Macleod, who had repeatedly helped Dr. Johnson to sixteen dishes or upwards of tea, asked him if a small basin would not save him trouble, and be more agreeable. " I wonder, Madam," answered he roughly, " why refreshment

refreshment. Such signs of effeminacy as these, suited but ill with the appearance of a man, who, for his bodily strength and stature, has been compared to Polyphemus. (Page 355.)

All this while, the booksellers, who by his own confession were his best friends<sup>1</sup>, had their eyes upon Johnson, and reflected with some concern on what seemed to them a misapplication of his talents. The furnishing magazines, reviews, and even news-papers, with literary intelligence, and the authors of books, who could not write them for themselves, with dedications and prefaces, they looked on as employments beneath him, who had attained to such eminence as a writer; they, therefore, in the year 1756, found out for him such a one as seemed to afford a prospect both of amusement and profit: this was an edition of Shakespeare's dramatic works, which, by a concurrence of circumstances, was now become necessary, to answer the increasing demand of the public for the writings of that author<sup>2</sup>. . . .

A stranger to Johnson's character and temper would have thought, that the study of an author, whose skill in the science of human life was so deep, and whose perfections were so many and various as to be above the reach of all praise, must have been the most pleasing employment that his imagination could suggest, but it was not so: in a visit that he one morning made to me, I congratulated him on his being now engaged in a work that suited his genius, and that, requiring none of that severe application which his Dictionary had condemned him to, I

all the ladies ask me such impertinent questions. It is to save yourselves trouble, Madam, and not me." The lady was silent and went on with her task.'

Boswell tells nothing of this; it is probable that the number of the cups and the roughness of the answer were increased by tradition. *Ante*, ii. 76.

<sup>1</sup> 'I once said to him, "I am sorry, Sir, you did not get more for your

*Dictionary*." His answer was, "I am sorry too. But it was very well. The booksellers are generous liberal-minded men."' *Life*, i. 304.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 415. 'The seventeenth century had been satisfied with four editions of his collected plays. In the first hundred years after his death there were but six; in the next fifty years there were three and twenty.' *Writers and Readers*, by George Birkbeck Hill, p. 64.

doubted

doubted not would be executed *con amore*.—His answer was, 'I look upon this as I did upon the Dictionary: it is all work, and my inducement to it is not love or desire of fame, but the want of money, which is the only motive to writing that I know of'.—And the event was evidence to me, that in this speech he declared his genuine sentiments; for neither in the first place did he set himself to collect early editions of his author<sup>2</sup>, old plays, translations of histories, and of the classics, and other materials necessary for his purpose, nor could he be prevailed on to enter into that course of reading, without which it seemed impossible to come at the sense of his author<sup>3</sup>. It was provoking to all his friends to see him waste his days, his weeks, and his months so long, that they feared a mental lethargy had seized him, out of which he would never recover. In this, however, they were happily deceived, for, after two years inactivity, they found him roused to action, and engaged—not in the prosecution of the work, for the completion whereof he stood doubly bound, but in a new one, the furnishing a series of periodical essays, intitled, and it may be thought not improperly, 'The Idler<sup>4</sup>', as his motive to the employment was aversion to a labour he had undertaken, though in the execution, it must be owned, it merited a better name. (Page 361.)

About this time he had, from a friend who highly esteemed him, the offer of a living<sup>5</sup>, of which he might have rendered himself capable by entering into holy orders: it was a rectory, in a pleasant country, and of such a yearly value as might have tempted one in better circumstances than himself to accept it; but he had scruples about the duties of the ministerial function, that he could not, after deliberation, overcome. 'I have not,' said he, 'the requisites for the office, and I cannot, in my

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 19; *ante*, ii. 90. When he had finished his *Shakespeare* he wrote:—'To tell the truth, as I felt no solicitude about this work, I receive no great comfort from its conclusion.' *Letters*, i. 123.

<sup>3</sup> 'I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but

have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative.' *Works*, v. 146.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 473.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 415; *Life*, i. 330.

<sup>5</sup> It was a living in Lincolnshire, offered him by Bennet Langton's father. *Ib.* i. 320.

conscience

conscience, shear that flock which I am unable to feed.'—Upon conversing with him on that inability which was his reason for declining the offer, it was found to be a suspicion of his patience to undergo the fatigue of catechising and instructing a great number of poor ignorant persons, who, in religious matters, had, perhaps, every thing to learn. (Page 365.)

He had removed, about the beginning of the year 1760, to chambers two doors down the Inner-Temple lane; and I have been told by his neighbour at the corner, that during the time he dwelt there, more enquiries were made at his shop for Mr. Johnson, than for all the inhabitants put together of both the Inner and Middle Temple<sup>1</sup>. (Page 383.)

Johnson had, early in his life, been a dabbler in physic<sup>2</sup>, and laboured under some secret bodily infirmities that gave him occasion once to say to me, that he knew not what it was to be totally free from pain<sup>3</sup>. He now drew into a closer intimacy with him a man, with whom he had been acquainted from the year 1746<sup>4</sup>, one of the lowest practitioners in the art of healing that ever sought a livelihood by it: him he consulted in all that related to his health, and made so necessary to him as hardly to be able to live without him.

The name of this person was Robert Levett. An account of him is given in the Gentleman's Magazine for February 1785: an earlier than that, I have now lying before me, in a letter from a person in the country to Johnson, written in answer to one in which he had desired to be informed of some particulars respecting his friend Levett, then lately deceased<sup>5</sup>. The substance of this information is as follows:

He was born at Kirk Ella, a parish about five miles distant from Hull, and lived with his parents till about twenty years of age. He had acquired some knowledge of the Latin language,

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 350, n. 3; *Letters*, i. 90, n. 3; *ante*, i. 416.

<sup>2</sup> Not only early, but through most of his life, 'he was a great dabbler in physic.' *Life*, iii. 152.

<sup>3</sup> He wrote to Hector towards the

end of his life:—'My health has been from my twentieth year such as has seldom afforded me a single day of ease.' *Ib.* iv. 147.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iv. 137.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* iv. 143; *Letters*, ii. 243.

and

and had a propensity to learning, which his parents not being able to gratify, he went to live as a shopman with a woollen-draper at Hull: with him he stayed two years, during which time he learned from a neighbour of his master somewhat of the practice of physic: at the end thereof he came to London, with a view possibly to improve himself in that profession; but by some strange accident was led to pursue another course, and became steward, or some other upper servant, to the then lord Cardigan [or Cadogan]; and having saved some money, he took a resolution to travel, and visited France and Italy for the purpose, as his letters mention, of gaining experience in physic, and, returning to London with a valuable library which he had collected abroad, placed one of his brothers apprentice to a mathematical-instrument maker, and provided for the education of another. After this he went to Paris, and, for improvement, attended the hospitals in that city. At the end of five years he returned to England, and taking lodgings in the house of an attorney in Northumberland court, near Charing cross, he became a practicer of physic. The letter adds, that he was about seventy-eight at the time of his death.

The account of Levett in the Gentleman's Magazine is anonymous; I nevertheless give it verbatim, and mean hereafter to insert a letter of Johnson's to Dr. Lawrence, notifying his death, and stanzas of his writing on that occasion<sup>1</sup>.

'Mr. Levett, though an Englishman by birth, became early in life a waiter at a coffee-house in Paris. The surgeons who frequented it, finding him of an inquisitive turn, and attentive to their conversation, made a purse for him, and gave him some instructions in their art. They afterwards furnished him with the means of other knowledge, by procuring him free admission to such lectures in pharmacy and anatomy as were read by the ablest professors of that period. Hence his introduction to a business, which afforded him a continual, though slender maintenance. Where the middle part of his life was spent, is uncertain. He resided, however, above twenty years under the roof of Johnson, who never wished him to be regarded as an

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 137.

inferior, or treated him like a dependent<sup>1</sup>. He breakfasted with the doctor every morning, and perhaps was seen no more by him till mid-night. Much of the day was employed in attendance on his patients, who were chiefly of the lowest rank of tradesmen. The remainder of his hours he dedicated to Hunter's lectures<sup>2</sup>, and to as many different opportunities of improvement, as he could meet with on the same gratuitous conditions. "All his medical knowledge," said Johnson, "and it is not inconsiderable<sup>3</sup>, was obtained through the ear. Though he buys books, he seldom looks into them, or discovers any power by which he can be supposed to judge of an author's merit."

'Before he became a constant inmate of the Doctor's house, he married, when he was near sixty, a woman of the town, who had persuaded him (notwithstanding their place of congress was a small-coal shed in Fetter-lane) that she was nearly related to a man of fortune, but was injuriously kept by him out of large possessions. It is almost needless to add, that both parties were disappointed in their views. If Levett took her for an heiress, who in time might be rich, she regarded him as a physician already in considerable practice.—Compared with the marvels of this transaction, as Johnson himself declared when relating them, the tales in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments seem familiar occurrences. Never was infant more completely duped than our hero. He had not been married four months, before a writ was taken out against him, for debts incurred by his wife.—He was secreted, and his friend then procured him a protection from a foreign minister<sup>4</sup>. In a short time after-

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Johnson has frequently observed, that Levett was indebted to him for nothing more than house-room, his share in a penny loaf at breakfast, and now and then a dinner on a Sunday.' *Note by Hawkins*.

<sup>2</sup> Both William Hunter and his brother John lectured. For William Hunter, see *Letters*, ii. 339.

<sup>3</sup> 'He had acted for many years in the capacity of surgeon and apothecary to Johnson, under the direction of Dr. Lawrence.' *Note by Hawkins*.

<sup>4</sup> 'May 13, 1771. A cause was determined in the King's Bench, in favour of a Merchant who had demands on a person protected by a foreign Ambassador, that person not being a real servant brought over with the Ambassador, but having since procured his protection. Of all the causes determined in law within these twenty years perhaps no one is of more importance than the present.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1771, p. 235.

wards,

wards, she ran away from him, and was tried, providentially, in his opinion, for picking pockets at the Old Bailey. Her husband was, with difficulty, prevented from attending the court, in the hope she would be hanged. She pleaded her own cause, and was acquitted; a separation between this ill-starred couple took place; and Dr. Johnson then took Levett home, where he continued till his death, which happened suddenly, without pain, Jan. 17, 1782. His vanity in supposing that a young woman of family and fortune should be enamoured of him, Dr. Johnson thought, deserved some check.—As no relations of his were known to Johnson, he advertised for them<sup>1</sup>. In the course of a few weeks an heir at law appeared, and ascertained his title to what effects the deceased had left behind.

‘Levett’s character was rendered valuable by repeated proof of honesty, tenderness, and gratitude to his benefactor, as well as by an unwearied diligence in his profession<sup>2</sup>.—His single failing was, an occasional departure from sobriety. Johnson would observe, he was, perhaps, the only man who ever became intoxicated through motives of prudence. He reflected, that if he refused the gin or brandy offered him by some of his patients, he could have been no gainer by their cure, as they might have had nothing else to bestow on him. This habit of taking a fee, in whatever shape it was exhibited, could not be put off by advice or admonition of any kind. He would swallow what he did not like, nay, what he knew would injure him, rather than go home with an idea, that his skill had been exerted without recompense. “Had (said Johnson) all his patients maliciously combined to reward him with meat and strong liquors instead of money, he would either have burst, like the dragon in the Apocrypha<sup>3</sup>, through repletion, or been scorched up, like Portia, by swallowing fire<sup>4</sup>.” But let not from hence an imputation of rapaciousness be fixed upon him. Though he took all that

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 143.

<sup>2</sup> ‘He was an old and faithful friend,’ Johnson recorded in his *Diary*. *Ante*, i. 102. ‘He was very useful to the poor,’ he wrote to Mr. Langton. *Life*, iv. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Bel and the Dragon, verse 27.

‘With this she fell distract,  
And, her attendants absent,  
swallow’d fire.’

*Julius Caesar*, Act iv. sc. 3, l. 155.



was offered him, he demanded nothing from the poor, nor was known in any instance to have enforced the payment of even what was strictly his due.

‘His person was middle-sized and thin; his visage swarthy, adust and corrugated. His conversation, except on professional subjects, barren. When in *deshabille*, he might have been mistaken for an alchemist, whose complexion had been hurt by the fumes of the crucible, and whose clothes had suffered from the sparks of the furnace.

‘Such was Levett, whose whimsical frailty, if weighed against his good and useful qualities, was

“A floating atom, dust that falls unheeded  
Into the adverse scale, nor shakes the balance.”

*Irene*, Act i. sc. 3.’

To this character I here add as a supplement to it, a dictum of Johnson respecting Levett, viz. that his external appearance and behaviour were such, that he disgusted the rich, and terrified the poor<sup>1</sup>.

But notwithstanding all these offensive particulars, Johnson, whose credulity in some instances was as great as his incredulity in others, conceived of him as a skilful medical professor, and thought himself happy in having so near his person one who was to him, not solely a physician, a surgeon, or an apothecary, but all. In extraordinary cases he, however, availed himself of the assistance of his valued friend Dr. Lawrence, a man of whom, in respect of his piety, learning, and skill in his profession, it may almost be said, the world was not worthy, inasmuch as it suffered his talents, for the whole of his life, to remain, in a great measure, unemployed, and himself end his days in sorrow and obscurity<sup>2</sup>, . . .

In his [Dr. Lawrence’s] endeavours to attain to eminence, it

<sup>1</sup> Percy described Levett as ‘a modest, reserved man; humble and unaffected, ready to execute any commission for Johnson, and grateful for his patronage.’ Anderson’s *Johnson*, ed. 1815, p. 181. ‘Levett, Madam, (said Johnson), is a brutal

fellow, but I have a good regard for him; for his brutality is in his manners, not his mind.’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, i. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 104; *Life*, ii. 296, n. 1; iv. 143.

was his misfortune to fail: he was above those arts by which popularity is acquired, and had besides some personal defects and habits which stood in his way; a vacuity of countenance very unfavourable to an opinion of his learning or sagacity, and certain convulsive motions of the head and features that gave pain to the beholders, and drew off attention to all that he said. . . .

The sincere and lasting friendship that subsisted between Johnson and Levett, may serve to shew, that although a similarity of dispositions and qualities has a tendency to beget affection, or something very nearly resembling it, it may be contracted and subsist where this inducement is wanting; for hardly were ever two men less like each other, in this respect, than were they. Levett had not an understanding capable of comprehending the talents of Johnson: the mind of Johnson was therefore, as to him, a blank; and Johnson, had the eye of his mind been more penetrating than it was, could not discern, what did not exist, any particulars in Levett's character that at all resembled his own. He had no learning, and consequently was an unfit companion for a learned man; and though it may be said, that having lived for some years abroad, he must have seen and remarked many things that would have afforded entertainment in the relation, this advantage was counterbalanced by an utter inability for continued conversation, taciturnity being one of the most obvious features in his character<sup>1</sup>: the consideration of all which particulars almost impels me to say, that Levett admired Johnson because others admired him, and that Johnson in pity loved Levett, because few others could find any thing in him to love.

And here I cannot forbear remarking, that, almost throughout his life, poverty and distressed circumstances seemed to be the strongest of all recommendations to his favour. When asked by one of his most intimate friends, how he could bear to be

<sup>1</sup> 'He was (says Boswell) of a strange grotesque appearance, stiff and formal in his manner, and seldom said a word while any company was present.' *Life*, i. 243. Johnson wrote

to Mrs. Thrale:—'My house has lost Levett, a man who took interest in everything, and therefore ready at conversation.' *Letters*, ii. 309.

surrounded by such necessitous and undeserving people as he had about him, his answer was, 'If I did not assist them no one else would, and they must be lost for want.' (Page 396.)

Johnson was a great lover of penitents<sup>1</sup>, and of all such men as, in their conversation, made professions of piety<sup>2</sup>; of this man<sup>3</sup> he would say, that he was one of the most pious of all his acquaintance, but in this, as he frequently was in the judgment he formed of others, he was mistaken. It is possible that Southwell might, in his conversation, express such sentiments of religion and moral obligation, as served to shew that he was not an infidel, but he seldom went sober to bed<sup>4</sup>, and as seldom rose from it before noon.

He was also an admirer of such as he thought well-bred men. What was his notion of good breeding I could never learn. If it was not courtesy and affability, it could to him be nothing; for he was an incompetent judge of graceful attitudes and motions, and of the ritual of behaviour. Of lord Southwell<sup>5</sup>, the brother of the above person, and of Tom Hervey, a profligate, worthless man<sup>6</sup>, the author of the letter to Sir Thomas Hanmer<sup>7</sup>, and who had nothing in his external appearance that could in the least recommend him, he was used to say, they were each of them a model for the first man of quality in the kingdom<sup>8</sup>. (Page 406.)

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 406, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Reynolds said that Johnson 'appeared to have little suspicion of hypocrisy in religion.' *Ante*, ii. 9, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Southwell. *Letters*, i. 205.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson said of his old school-fellow, the Rev. Charles Congreve, 'He has an elderly woman . . . who encourages him in drinking, in which he is very willing to be encouraged; not that he gets drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy.' *Life*, ii. 460.

<sup>5</sup> 'Lord Southwell,' he said, 'was the highest-bred man without insolence that I ever was in company with; the most *qualified* I ever saw.' *Life*, iv. 173.

<sup>6</sup> 'Tom Hervey, who died 't' other day, though a vicious man, was one of the genteelst men that ever lived.' *Ib.* ii. 341. See *ante*, i. 254.

Horace Walpole wrote on Jan. 24, 1775 (*Letters*, vi. 182):—'Tom Hervey is dead; after sending for his wife, and re-acknowledging her in pathetic heroics.'

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, ii. 32, n. 1; 33, n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> 'Garrick used to tell, that Johnson said of an actor, who played Sir Harry Wildair at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow"; when, in fact, according to Garrick's account, "he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards."' *Ib.* ii. 465.

Johnson

Johnson was now at ease in his circumstances<sup>1</sup>: he wanted his usual motive to impel him to the exertion of his talents, necessity, and he sunk into indolence. Whoever called in on him at about mid-day, found him and Levett at breakfast, Johnson in deshabille, as just risen from bed, and Levett filling out tea for himself and his patron alternately, no conversation passing between them. All that visited him at these hours were welcome. A night's rest, and breakfast, seldom failed to refresh and fit him for discourse, and whoever withdrew went too soon<sup>2</sup>. His invitations to dinners abroad were numerous, and he seldom balked them. At evening parties, where were no cards, he very often made one; and from these, when once engaged, most unwillingly retired.

In the relaxation of mind, which almost any one might have foreseen would follow the grant of his pension<sup>3</sup>, he made little account of that lapse of time, on which, in many of his papers, he so severely moralizes. And, though he was so exact an observer of the passing minutes, as frequently, after his coming from church, to note in his diary how many the service took up in reading, and the sermon in preaching<sup>4</sup>; he seemed to forget how many years had passed since he had begun to take in subscriptions for his edition of Shakespeare. Such a torpor had seized his faculties, as not all the remonstrances of his friends were able to cure: applied to some minds, they would have burned like caustics, but Johnson felt them not<sup>5</sup>. (Page 435.)

He removed from the Temple into a house in Johnson's court, Fleet-street, and invited thither his friend Mrs. Williams<sup>6</sup>. An

<sup>1</sup> Through his pension. *Ante*, i. 417; *Life*, i. 372. <sup>2</sup> *Ib.* ii. 118.

<sup>3</sup> This 'relaxation of mind' preceded his pension. He had for some time been 'living in poverty, total idleness and the pride of literature.' *Ante*, i. 416. He brought the *Idler* to an end on April 5, 1760; after that he did next to nothing for some years. His *Shakespeare* was not published till 1765. His pension was granted in the summer of 1762.

<sup>4</sup> This diary is not in print.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, i. 319.

<sup>6</sup> She had lived with him in Gough Square (*Life*, i. 232), but had gone into lodgings when he went into chambers, first in Staple Inn, then in Gray's Inn, and lastly in Inner Temple Lane. *Ib.* i. 350, n. 3. In Scotland, referring to his house in Johnson's Court, he described himself as 'Johnson of that Ilk.' *Ib.* ii. 427, n. 2.

upper room, which had the advantages of a good light and free air, he fitted up for a study<sup>1</sup>, and furnished with books, chosen with so little regard to editions or their external appearance, as shewed they were intended for use, and that he disdained the ostentation of learning. Here he was in a situation and circumstances that enabled him to enjoy the visits of his friends, and to receive them in a manner suitable to the rank and condition of many of them. A silver standish, and some useful plate, which he had been prevailed on to accept as pledges of kindness from some who most esteemed him, together with furniture that would not have disgraced a better dwelling, banished those appearances of squalid indigence, which, in his less happy days, disgusted those who came to see him<sup>2</sup>.

In one of his diaries he noted down a resolution to take a seat in the church; this he might possibly do about the time of this his removal. The church he frequented was that of St. Clement Danes<sup>3</sup>, which, though not his parish-church, he preferred to that of the Temple, which I recommended to him, as being free from noise, and, in other respects, more commodious. His only reason was, that in the former he was best known. He was not constant in his attendance on divine worship<sup>4</sup>; but, from an opinion peculiar to himself, and which he once intimated to me, seemed to wait for some secret impulse as a motive to it. . . .

The Sundays which he passed at home were, nevertheless, spent in private exercises of devotion<sup>5</sup>, and sanctified by acts of charity of a singular kind: on that day he accepted of no

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell, dining with him in 1781, says that 'he produced now for the first time some handsome silver salvers, which, he told me, he had bought fourteen years ago; so it was a great day.' *Life*, iv. 92. See also *ib.* ii. 215, where Boswell, dining with him for the first time in 1773, 'found every thing in very good order,' and *ib.* ii. 376, where, occupying a room in his house in 1775, he 'found everything in excellent order.'

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 62, n. 6; *Life*, ii. 214.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, ii. 94, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 'He was accustomed on these days to read the Scriptures, and particularly the Greek Testament, with the paraphrase of Erasmus. Very late in his life he formed a resolution to read the Bible through, which he confessed to me he had never done; at the same time lamenting, that he had so long neglected to peruse, what he called the charter of his salvation.' *Note by Hawkins*. See *ante*, i. 59.

invitation

invitation abroad, but gave a dinner to such of his poor friends as might else have gone without one'. (Page 452.)

To impress the more strongly on his mind the value of time, and the use it behoved every wise man to make of it, he indulged himself in an article of luxury, which, as far as my observation and remembrance will serve me, he never enjoyed till this late period of his life: it was a watch, which he caused to be made for him, in the year 1768, by those eminent artists Mudge and Dutton: it was of metal, and the outer case covered with tortoise-shell; he paid for it seventeen guineas. On the dial-plate thereof, which was of enamel, he caused to be inscribed, in the original Greek, these words of our blessed Saviour, *Νυξ γὰρ ἐρχεται*, but with the mistake of a letter  $\mu$  for  $\nu$ : the meaning of them is, 'For the night cometh.' This, though a memento of great importance, he, about three years after, thought pedantic; he, therefore, exchanged the dial-plate for one in which the inscription was omitted'. (Page 460.)

Novelty, and variety of occupations, were objects that engaged his attention, and from these he never failed to extract information. Though born and bred in a city<sup>3</sup>, he well understood both the theory and practice of agriculture, and even the management

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Piozzi says that 'Dr. Johnson, commonly spending the middle of the week at our house, kept his numerous family in Fleet-street upon a settled allowance; but returned to them every Saturday to give them three good dinners and his company, before he came back to us on the Monday night.' *Ante*, i. 205.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, ii. 57.

In R. Polwhele's *Traditions*, p. 353, an extract is given from a letter dated April 29, 1794, in which the writer, a Christ Church man, B— says that he has bought Johnson's watch from Francis Barber, 'who is now settled at Lichfield, and I am afraid in great want.' The watch, he says, was made by Mudge, the brother of Dr. Mudge, whose sermons John-

son spoke well of [*Life*, iv. 77]. The watch-maker in gratitude exerted himself in making it. For Thomas Mudge, the watch-maker, see *Letters*, i. 93, n. 2.

Canon Pailye of Lichfield told Mr. Croker that he had purchased the watch from Barber. Croker's *Boswell*, x. 106.

For Porson's humorous letter about the watch, see *ante*, ii. 81.

The same Greek inscription Scott put on his dial in his garden at Abbotsford. *Ante*, i. 123, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Lichfield was so small a city that a few minutes' walk would have taken him into the fields. Even so late as 1781 it did not contain 4,000 inhabitants. Harwood's *History of Lichfield*, p. 380.

of

of a farm: he could describe, with great accuracy, the process of malting; and, had necessity driven him to it, could have thatched a dwelling<sup>1</sup>. Of field recreations, such as hunting, setting, and shooting, he would discourse like a sportsman, though his personal defects rendered him, in a great measure, incapable of deriving pleasure from any such exercises.

But he had taken a very comprehensive view of human life and manners, and, that he was well acquainted with the views and pursuits of all classes and characters of men, his writings abundantly shew. This kind of knowledge he was ever desirous of increasing, even as he advanced in years: to gratify it, he was accessible to all comers, and yielded to the invitations of such of his friends as had residences in the country, to vary his course of living, and pass the pleasanter months of the year in the shades of obscurity.

In these visits, where there were children in the family, he took great delight in examining them as to their progress in learning, or, to make use of a term almost obsolete, of apposing them<sup>2</sup>. To this purpose, I once heard him say, that in a visit to Mrs. Percy, who had the care of one of the young princes, at the queen's house<sup>3</sup>, the prince of Wales<sup>4</sup>, being then a child, came into the room, and began to play about; when Johnson, with his usual curiosity, took an opportunity of asking him what books he was reading, and, in particular, enquired as to his knowledge of the Scriptures: the prince, in his answers, gave him great satisfaction; and, as to the last, said, that part of his daily exercises was to read Ostervald<sup>5</sup>. In many families into

<sup>1</sup> In the Isle of Skye he described the durability of a roof thatched with Lincolnshire reeds. *Life*, v. 263. In his youth he had worked at book-binding. *Ante*, i. 361. For his varied knowledge see *Life*, v. 215, 246, 263. Much of it he had, no doubt, acquired from the books which he read for his *Dictionary*. For his 'talking ostentatiously' about granulating gunpowder, see *ib.* v. 124.

<sup>2</sup> 'This word is not now in use, except that in some schools to

put grammatical questions to a boy is called to *pose* him; and we now use *pose* for *puzzle*.' Johnson's *Dictionary*.

It is preserved in Apposition Day, the term still applied to Speech Day at St. Paul's School.

<sup>3</sup> Buckingham House, on the same site as the present Buckingham Palace. *Life*, ii. 33; *Letters*, i. 414, n. 2. See also *ante*, ii. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Afterwards George IV.

<sup>5</sup> Burnet describes Ostervald as which

which he went, the fathers were often desirous of producing their sons to him for his opinion of their parts, and of the proficiency they had made at school, which, in frequent instances, came out to be but small. He once told me, that being at the house of a friend, whose son in his school-vacation was come home, the father spoke of this child as a lad of pregnant parts, and said, that he was well versed in the classics, and acquainted with history, in the study whereof he took great delight. Having this information, Johnson, as a test of the young scholar's attainments, put this question to him:—'At what time did the heathen oracles cease?'—The boy, not in the least daunted, answered:—'At the dissolution of religious houses'. (Page 469.)

About this time [1775-6], Dr. Johnson changed his dwelling in Johnson's court, for a somewhat larger in Bolt court<sup>2</sup>, Fleet street, where he commenced an intimacy with the landlord of it, a very worthy and sensible man, some time since deceased, Mr. Edmund Allen the printer<sup>3</sup>. Behind it was a garden, which he took delight in watering; a room on the ground-floor was assigned to Mrs. Williams, and the whole of the two pair of stairs floor was made a repository for his books; one of the rooms thereon being his study. Here, in the intervals of his residence

'the most eminent ecclesiastic' of the State of Neufchatel, and as 'one of the best and most judicious divines of the age: he was bringing that Church to a near agreement with our forms of worship.' Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, ed. 1818, iv. 165.

Many of his works were translated into English.

The Prince of Wales was but eight years old, when 'orders were given from the Lord Chamberlain's Office for a Chaplain in waiting to attend at the Queen's Palace to read prayers, for the first time, to the Prince of Wales, in the absence of their Majesties, under the direction of the

Lord Bishop of Chester.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1771, p. 235.

Horace Walpole, writing of the Prince at the age of nineteen, says (*Journal of the Reign of George III*, ii. 503):—'Nothing was coarser than his conversation and phrases; and it made men smile to find that in the palace of piety and pride his Royal Highness had learnt nothing but the dialect of footmen and grooms.'

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Piozzi tells a similar story. *Ante*, i. 303.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, ii. 427.

<sup>3</sup> On his death he said: 'I have lost one of my best and tenderest friends.' *Ib.* iv. 354.



at Streatham<sup>1</sup>, he received the visits of his friends, and, to the most intimate of them, sometimes gave not inelegant dinners.

Being at ease in his circumstances, and free from that solicitude which had embittered the former part of his life, he sunk into indolence, till his faculties seemed to be impaired: deafness grew upon him; long intervals of mental absence interrupted his conversation, and it was difficult to engage his attention to any subject<sup>2</sup>. His friends, from these symptoms, concluded, that his lamp was emitting its last rays, but the lapse of a short period gave them ample proofs to the contrary<sup>3</sup>. (Page 531.)

That this celebrated friendship [between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Thrale] subsisted so long as it did, was a subject of wonder to most of Johnson's intimates, for such were his habits of living, that he was by no means a desirable inmate. His unmanly thirst for tea made him very troublesome. At Streatham, he would suffer the mistress of the house to sit up and make it for him, till two or three hours after midnight<sup>4</sup>. When retired to rest, he indulged himself in the dangerous practice of reading in bed<sup>5</sup>. It was a very hard matter to get him decently dressed by dinner-time, even when select companies were invited; and no one could be sure, that in his table-conversation with strangers, he would not, by contradiction, or the general asperity of his behaviour, offend them<sup>6</sup>.

These irregularities were not only borne with by Mr. Thrale, but he seemed to think them amply atoned for by the honour he derived from such a guest as no table in the three kingdoms could produce; but, he dying, it was not likely that the same sentiments and opinions should descend to those of his family who were left behind. (Page 561.)

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 493.

'My friend bade me welcome, but struck me quite dumb,

With tidings that Johnson and Burke would not come;

"For I knew it," he cried, "both eternally fail,

The one with his speeches, and t'other with Thrale."

Goldsmith's *Haunch of Venison*.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 98.

<sup>3</sup> By the *Lives of the Poets*.

<sup>4</sup> This is a gross exaggeration of what Mrs. Piozzi wrote. *Ante*, i. 329.

Hawkins apparently never visited the Thrales (see Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*, i. 65 n.), so that his account is second-hand.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 307.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 242.

The visits of idle, and some of them very worthless persons, were never unwelcome to Johnson ; and though they interrupted him in his studies and meditations, yet, as they gave him opportunities of discourse, and furnished him with intelligence, he strove rather to protract than shorten or discountenance them ; and, when abroad, such was the laxity of his mind, that he consented to the doing of many things, otherwise indifferent, for the avowed reason that they would drive on time <sup>1</sup>. (Page 565.)

In his return to London, he stopped at Lichfield, and from thence wrote to me several letters <sup>2</sup>, that served but to prepare me for meeting him in a worse state of health than I had ever seen him in. The concluding paragraph of the last of them is as follows: 'I am relapsing into the dropsy very fast, and shall make such haste to town that it will be useless to write to me ; but when I come, let me have the benefit of your advice, and the consolation of your company.' [Dated Nov. 7, 1784.] After about a fortnight's stay there, he took his leave of that city, and of Mrs. Porter, whom he never afterwards saw, and arrived in town on the sixteenth day of November <sup>3</sup>.

After the declaration he had made of his intention to provide for his servant Frank, and before his going into the country, I had frequently pressed him to make a will, and had gone so far as to make a draft of one, with blanks for the names of the executors and residuary legatee, and directing in what manner it was to be executed and attested ; but he was exceedingly averse to this business ; and, while he was in Derbyshire, I repeated my solicitations, for this purpose, by letters. When he arrived in town he had done nothing in it <sup>4</sup>, and, to what I formerly said,

<sup>1</sup> 'When I, in a low-spirited fit, was talking to him with indifference of the pursuits which generally engage us in a course of action, and inquiring a *reason* for taking so much trouble ; "Sir," said he, in an animated tone, "it is driving on the system of life."' *Life*, iv. 112.

<sup>2</sup> None of these have been published.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 377.

<sup>4</sup> Five years earlier Johnson had been urging Thrale to make his will. He wrote to Mrs. Thrale :—'Some days before our last separation Mr. Thrale and I had one evening an earnest discourse about the business with Mr. Scrase [a solicitor]. . . . Do not let those fears prevail which you know to be unreasonable ; a will brings the end of life no nearer.' *Letters*, ii. 115.

I now added, that he had never mentioned to me the disposal of the residue of his estate, which, after the purchase of an annuity for Frank, I found would be something considerable, and that he would do well to bequeath it to his relations. His answer was, 'I care not what becomes of the residue.'—A few days after, it appeared that he had executed the draft, the blanks remaining, with all the solemnities of a real will. I could get him no farther, and thus, for some time, the matter rested.

He had scarce arrived in town, before it was found to be too true, that he was relapsing into a dropsy; and farther, that he was at times grievously afflicted with an asthma. Under an apprehension that his end was approaching, he enquired of Dr. Brocklesby, with great earnestness indeed, how long he might probably live, but could obtain no other than unsatisfactory answers<sup>1</sup>: and, at the same time, if I remember right, under a seeming great pressure of mind, he thus addressed him, in the words of Shakespeare:

'Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd;  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
And with some sweet oblivious antidote,  
Cleanse the full bosom of that perilous stuff,  
Which weighs upon the heart?' —

*Macbeth* [Act v. sc. 3].

To which the doctor, who was nearly as well read in the above author as himself, readily replied,

— 'Therein the patient  
Must minister to himself.'

Upon which Johnson exclaimed—'Well applied:—that's more than poetically true<sup>2</sup>.'

He had, from the month of July in this year, marked the progress of his diseases, in a journal which he intitled 'Ægri Ephemeris,' noting therein his many sleepless nights by the words, *Nox insomnis*. This he often contemplated, and, finding very little ground for hope that he had much longer to live, he set himself to prepare for his dissolution, and betook himself to

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 415.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 400.

private prayer and the reading of Erasmus on the New Testament<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Clarke's sermons<sup>2</sup>, and such other books as had a tendency to calm and comfort him.

In this state of his body and mind, he seemed to be very anxious in the discharge of two offices that he had hitherto neglected to perform: one was, the communicating to the world the names of the persons concerned in the compilation of the *Universal History*; the other was, the rescuing from oblivion the memory of his father and mother, and also, of his brother: the former of these he discharged, by delivering to Mr. Nichols the printer, in my presence, a paper containing the information above-mentioned, and directions to deposit it in the *British Museum*<sup>3</sup>. The other, by composing a memorial of his deceased parents and his brother, intended for their tomb-stone, which, whether it was ever inscribed thereon or not, is extant in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January 1785<sup>4</sup>.

He would also have written, in Latin verse, an epitaph for Mr. Garrick, but found himself unequal to the task of original poetic composition in that language.

Nevertheless, he succeeded in an attempt to render into Latin metre, from the Greek *Anthologia*, sundry of the epigrams therein contained, that had been omitted by other translators, alledging as a reason, which he had found in Fabricius<sup>5</sup>, that Henry Stephens, Buchanan, Grotius, and others, had paid a like tribute to literature. The performance of this task was the employment of his sleepless nights, and, as he informed me, it afforded him great relief<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Paraphrase and Notes of Erasmus, in my judgment, was the most important Book even of his day. We must remember that it was almost legally adopted by the Church of England.' Milman's *Latin Christianity*, ed. 1855, vi. 624.

'In the reign of Elizabeth it was commanded that in every church there should be a copy of this book on a desk for the use of the congregation.' Jortin's *Erasmus*, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 416; *ante*, i. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 382; *Letters*, ii. 431.

<sup>4</sup> It seems likely that the stone was never set up. *Life*, iv. 393, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> In the Sale Catalogue of Johnson's Library, Lot 78 is *Fabricii bibliotheca Graeca* in 6 vols., and Lot 300 the same work in 8 vols.

<sup>6</sup> On April 19, 1784, he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'When I lay sleepless, I used to drive the night along by turning Greek epigrams into Latin.' *Letters*, ii. 391. See also *Life*, iv. 384.

His

His complaints still increasing, I continued pressing him to make a will, but he still procrastinated that business. On the twenty-seventh of November, in the morning, I went to his house, with a purpose still farther to urge him not to give occasion, by dying intestate, for litigation among his relations; but finding that he was gone to pass the day with the Reverend Mr. Strahan, at Islington, I followed him thither, and found there our old friend Mr. Ryland, and Mr. Hoole<sup>1</sup>. Upon my sitting down, he said, that the prospect of the change he was about to undergo, and the thought of meeting his Saviour, troubled him, but that he had hope that he would not reject him. I then began to discourse with him about his will, and the provision for Frank, till he grew angry<sup>2</sup>. He told me, that he had signed and sealed the paper I left him;—but that, said I, had blanks in it, which, as it seems, you have not filled up with the names of the executors.—‘You should have filled them up yourself,’ answered he.—I replied, that such an act would have looked as if I meant to prevent his choice of a fitter person.—‘Sir,’ said he, ‘these minor virtues are not to be exercised in matters of such importance as this.’—At length, he said, that on his return home, he would send for a clerk, and dictate a will to him.—You will then, said I, be *inops consilii*; rather do it now. With Mr. Strahan’s permission, I will be his guest at dinner; and, if Mr. Hoole will please to hold the pen, I will, in a few words, make such a disposition of your estate as you shall direct.—To this he assented; but such a paroxysm of the asthma seized him, as prevented our going on. As the fire burned up, he found himself relieved, and grew chearful. ‘The fit,’ said he, ‘was very sharp; but I am now easy.’ After I had dictated a few lines, I told him, that he being a man of eminence for learning and parts, it would afford an illustrious example, and well become him, to make such an explicit declaration of his belief, as might obviate all suspicions that he was any other than a Christian<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Post* in Mr. Hoole’s *Anecdotes*.

<sup>2</sup> He grew angry, no doubt, with Hawkins for protesting against the annuity for Frank, which that ‘brutal fellow’ described in his *Life of*

*Johnson* (pp. 599, 605) as ‘the effects of ill-directed benevolence,’ and as ‘ostentatious bounty.’

<sup>3</sup> ‘A few years ago it was the uniform practice to begin wills with the

He

He thanked me for the hint, and, calling for paper, wrote on a slip, that I had in my hand and gave him, the following words: 'I humbly commit to the infinite and eternal goodness of Almighty God, my soul polluted with many sins; but, as I hope, purified by repentance, and redeemed, as I trust, by the death of Jesus Christ;' and, returning it to me, said, 'This I commit to your custody.'

Upon my calling on him for directions to proceed, he told me, that his father, in the course of his trade as a bookseller, had become bankrupt, and that Mr. William Innys had assisted him with money or credit to continue his business—'This,' said he, 'I consider as an obligation on me to be grateful to his descendants, and I therefore mean to give 200*l.* to his representative'.—He then meditated a devise of his house at Lichfield to the corporation of that city for a charitable use; but, it being freehold, he said—'I cannot live a twelve-month, and the last statute of mortmain stands in the way: I must, therefore, think of some other disposition of it'.—His next consideration was a provision for Frank, concerning the amount whereof I found he had been consulting Dr. Brocklesby, to whom he had put

words, "In the name of God, Amen"; and frequently to insert therein a declaration of the testator's hope of pardon in the merits of his Saviour; but, in these more refined times, such forms are deemed superfluous.' HAWKINS.

Mr. Pepys told Hannah More that this request was made to Johnson 'to counteract the poison of Hume's impious declaration of his opinions in his last moments.' H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 393. See *Life*, iii. 153, and *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, Preface, p. 38.

'The late Mr. Allen of Magdalen Hall [*Life*, i. 336], who was a privileged person, and could say what he pleased to Johnson, addressed him once very freely upon the subject [of chastising the vanity of scepticism]:—"Johnson, if you really are

a Christian, as I suppose you to be, do write something to make us sure of it."'*Kenyon MSS. Hist. MSS. Comm.*, 14th Report, iv. 540.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 402, n. 2, 440.

Roger North, after describing the degradation among the booksellers soon after the Restoration, speaking of second-hand books continues:—'One that would go higher must take his fortune at blank walls and corners of streets, or repair to the sign of Bateman, Innys and one or two more, where are best choice and best penny-worths.' *Lives of the Norths*, ed. 1826, iii. 294.

<sup>2</sup> In his last will he directed it to be sold, the money arising therefrom to be distributed among some distant relations. *Life*, iv. 402, n. 2. It sold for £235. *Hawkins*, p. 599; *Letters*, i. 19, n. 1.

this

this question—‘What would be a proper annuity to bequeath to a favourite servant?’—The doctor answered, that the circumstances of the master were the truest measure, and that, in the case of a nobleman, 50*l.* a year was deemed an adequate reward for many years’ faithful service.—‘Then shall I,’ said Johnson, ‘be nobilissimus; for, I mean to leave Frank 70*l.* a year, and I desire you to tell him so<sup>1</sup>.’—And now, at the making of the will, a devise, equivalent to such a provision, was therein inserted. The residue of his estate and effects, which took in, though he intended it not, the house at Lichfield, he bequeathed to his executors, in trust for a religious association, which it is needless to describe<sup>2</sup>.

Having executed the will with the necessary formalities, he would have come home, but being pressed by Mr. and Mrs. Strahan to stay, he consented, and we all dined together. Towards the evening, he grew chearful, and I having promised to take him in my coach, Mr. Strahan and Mr. Ryland would accompany him to Bolt-court. In the way thither he appeared much at ease, and told stories. At eight I sat him down, and Mr. Strahan and Mr. Ryland betook themselves to their respective homes.

Sunday 28th. I saw him about noon; he was dozing; but waking, he found himself in a circle of his friends. Upon opening his eyes, he said, that the prospect of his dissolution was very terrible to him, and addressed himself to us all, in nearly these words: ‘You see the state in which I am; conflicting with bodily pain and mental distraction: while you are in health and strength, labour to do good, and avoid evil, if ever you hope to escape the distress that now oppresses me.’—A little while after,—‘I had, very early in my life, the seeds of goodness in

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 401.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell says that ‘he had thoughts of leaving to Pembroke College his house; but his friends who were about him very properly dissuaded him from it, and he bequeathed it to some poor relations.’ *Ib.* i. 75.

In a note on this passage I say

that ‘the statute of Mortmain, no doubt, would have hindered the bequest to the College.’ This was a mistake, as the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the Colleges within them, were exempted from its operation. Blackstone’s *Commentaries*, ed. 1775, ii. 274.

me: I had a love of virtue, and a reverence for religion<sup>1</sup>; and these, I trust, have brought forth in me fruits meet for repentance; and, if I have repented as I ought, I am forgiven. I have, at times, entertained a loathing of sin and of myself, particularly at the beginning of this year, when I had the prospect of death before me<sup>2</sup>; and this has not abated when my fears of death have been less; and, at these times, I have had such rays of hope shot into my soul, as have almost persuaded me, that I am in a state of reconciliation with God<sup>3</sup>.

29th. Mr. Langton, who had spent the evening with him, reported, that his hopes were increased, and that he was much cheered upon being reminded of the general tendency of his writings, and of his example<sup>4</sup>.

30th. I saw him in the evening, and found him chearful. Was informed, that he had, for his dinner, eaten heartily of a French duck pie and a pheasant.

Dec. 1. He was busied in destroying papers<sup>5</sup>.—Gave to Mr. Langton and another person, to fair copy, some translations of the Greek epigrams, which he had made in the preceding nights, and transcribed the next morning, and they began to work on them.

3d. Finding his legs continue to swell, he signified to his physicians a strong desire to have them scarified, but they, unwilling to put him to pain, and fearing a mortification, declined advising it. He afterwards consulted his surgeon, and he performed the operation on one leg.

4th. I visited him: the scarification, made yesterday in his leg, appeared to have had little effect.—He said to me, that he

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 68.

<sup>2</sup> On Feb. 6 he had written to Dr. Heberden:—'My distemper prevails, and my hopes sink, and dejection oppresses me.' *Letters*, ii. 376.

<sup>3</sup> On Oct. 6 he wrote:—'My mind is calmer than in the beginning of the year, and I comfort myself with hopes of every kind, neither despairing of ease in this world, nor of happiness in another.' *Letters*, ii. 423.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Carter, in one of her latest conversations with Dr. Johnson, spoke of 'his constant attention to religious duties and the soundness of his moral principles. He took her by the hand, and said with much eagerness, "You know this to be true; testify it to the world when I am gone."' *Memoirs of Mrs. Carter*, i. 41. See also *post*, p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iv. 403.



was easier in his mind, and as fit to die at that instant, as he could be a year hence.—He requested me to receive the sacrament with him on Sunday, the next day. Complained of great weakness, and of phantoms that haunted his imagination.

5th. Being Sunday, I communicated with him and Mr. Langton, and other of his friends, as many as nearly filled the room. Mr. Strahan, who was constant in his attendance on him throughout his illness, performed the office<sup>1</sup>. Previous to reading the exhortation, Johnson knelt, and with a degree of fervour that I had never been witness to before, uttered the following most eloquent and energetic prayer<sup>2</sup>: . . .

Upon rising from his knees, after the office was concluded, he said, that he dreaded to meet God in a state of idiocy, or with opium in his head<sup>3</sup>; and, that having now communicated with the effects of a dose upon him, he doubted if his exertions were the genuine operations of his mind, and repeated from bishop Taylor this sentiment, 'That little, that has been omitted in health, can be done to any purpose in sickness'<sup>4</sup>.

He very much admired, and often in the course of his illness recited, from the conclusion of old Isaac Walton's life of bishop Sanderson, the following pathetic request:

'Thus this pattern of meekness and primitive innocence changed this for a better life:—'tis now too late to wish, that mine may be like his; for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age, and God knows it hath not; but, I most humbly beseech Almighty God, that my death may; and I do as earnestly beg, that, if any reader shall receive any satisfaction from this very plain, and, as true relation, he will be so charitable as to say, Amen'<sup>5</sup>.

While he was dressing and preparing for this solemnity, an

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 416.

<sup>2</sup> For the prayer, see *ante*, i. 121.

<sup>3</sup> 'I will take no more physic, not even my opiates; for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded.' *Life*, iv. 415. For the effect of opium on him see *Letters*, ii. 437.

<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless in *Holy Dying* Jeremy Taylor has a whole section (ch. iii. sect. 6) on 'the advantages of sickness.'

<sup>5</sup> 'Thus this pattern of meekness and primitive innocence chang'd this for a better life. 'Tis now too late to wish that my life may be like his; for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my Age; but I humbly beseech Almighty God that my death may; and do as earnestly beg of every Reader to say Amen.' *The Life of Bishop Sanderson*, first ed., 1678.

accident happened which went very near to disarrange<sup>1</sup> his mind. He had mislaid, and was very anxious to find a paper that contained private instructions to his executors; and myself, Mr. Strahan, Mr. Langton, Mr. Hoole, Frank, and I believe some others that were about him, went into his bed-chamber to seek it. In our search, I laid my hands on a parchment-covered book, into which I imagined it might have been slipped. Upon opening the book, I found it to be meditations and reflections, in Johnson's own hand-writing; and having been told a day or two before by Frank, that a person formerly intimately connected with his master, a joint proprietor of a newspaper, well known among the booksellers, and of whom Mrs. Williams once told me she had often cautioned him to beware; I say, having been told that this person had lately been very importunate to get access to him, indeed to such a degree as that, when he was told that the doctor was not to be seen, he would push his way up stairs; and having stronger reasons than I need here mention, to suspect that this man might find and make an ill use of the book, I put it, and a less of the same kind, into my pocket; at the same time telling those around me, and particularly Mr. Langton and Mr. Strahan, that I had got both, with my reasons for thus securing them. After the ceremony was over, Johnson took me aside, and told me that I had a book of his in my pocket; I answered that I had two, and that to prevent their falling into the hands of a person who had attempted to force his way into the house, I had done as I conceived a friendly act, but not without telling his friends of it, and also my reasons. He then asked me what ground I had for my suspicion of the man I mentioned: I told him his great importunity to get admittance; and farther, that immediately after a visit which he made me, in the year 1775, I missed a paper of a public nature, and of great importance; and that a day or two after, and before it could be put to its intended use, I saw it in the news-papers<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For *disarrange*, see *ante*, ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> 'As I take no pleasure in the disgrace of others, I regret the necessity I am under of mentioning these

particulars: my reason for it is, that the transaction which so disturbed him may possibly be better known than the motives that actuated me at the time.' *Note by Hawkins.*

At the mention of this circumstance Johnson paused; but recovering himself, said, 'You should not have laid hands on the book; for had I missed it, and not known you had it, I should have roared for my book, as Othello did for his handkerchief<sup>1</sup>, and probably have run mad.'

I gave him time, till the next day, to compose himself, and then wrote him a letter, apologizing, and assigning at large the reasons for my conduct; and received a verbal answer by Mr. Langton, which, were I to repeat it, would render me suspected of inexcusable vanity; it concluded with these words, 'If I was not satisfied with this, I must be a savage<sup>2</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> Johnson refers to the speech where Emilia says to Othello:—

'Nay, lay thee down and roar.'

(Act v. Sc. 2.)

But it was not for his handkerchief that he roared, for he did not as yet know the trick that had been played on him.

<sup>2</sup> 'One of these volumes,' writes Boswell, 'Sir John Hawkins informs us, he put into his pocket; for which the excuse he states is, that he meant to preserve it from falling into the hands of a person whom he describes so as to make it sufficiently clear who is meant; "having strong reasons (said he,) to suspect that this man might find and make an ill use of the book." Why Sir John should suppose that the gentleman alluded to would act in this manner, he has not thought fit to explain. But what he did was not approved of by Johnson; who, upon being acquainted of it without delay by a friend, expressed great indignation, and warmly insisted on the book being delivered up; and, afterwards, in the supposition of his missing it, without knowing by whom it had been taken, he said, "Sir, I should have gone out of the world distrusting half mankind." Sir John next day wrote a letter to Johnson, as-

signing reasons for his conduct; upon which Johnson observed to Mr. Langton, "Bishop Sanderson could not have dictated a better letter. I could almost say, *Melius est sic penituisse quam non errasse*." The agitation into which Johnson was thrown by this incident, probably made him hastily burn those precious records which must ever be regretted.' *Life*, iv. 406, n. 1. Bishop Sanderson, I suppose, was selected on account of 'his casuistical learning' and of 'the very many cases that were resolved by letters,' when he was consulted by people of 'restless and wounded consciences.' Walton's *Lives*, ed. 1838, p. 378.

According to Miss Hawkins the 'person' was George Steevens, who had a share in the *St. James's Chronicle*. She says that he stole from her father's library the copy of an Address to the Throne from the Magistrates of Middlesex during the American war, and published it in his newspaper. *Memoirs of L. M. Hawkins*, i. 265. This certainly was 'a paper of a public nature,' but not 'of great importance'—unless in the eyes of a Middlesex Magistrate.

Of this incident there is no mention in the first edition. 'It is not so much to our purpose to enquire,

7th.

7th<sup>1</sup>. I again visited him. Before my departure, Dr. Brocklesby came in, and, taking him by the wrist, Johnson gave him

but the curious reader may perhaps be tempted to ask, why this remarkable circumstantial narrative was omitted in the *first* edition, or how it happens that the regular chronology is *now* varied to introduce it? *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1787, p. 522.

Porson, in his *Panegyric Epistle on Hawkins v. Johnson*, thus sarcastically comments on this fact:—

'In this age, which is so sharp-sighted in detecting forgery, I may perhaps be carried away by the prevailing rage; but I cannot help thinking, that the whole addition in pages 585-6 is spurious, and did not proceed from the pen of Sir John Hawkins. The Knight's style is clear and elegant; this account cloudy, inconsistent, and embarrassed. But I shall content myself with asking a few queries upon this important paragraph.

'Qu. i. Would a writer, confessedly so exact in his choice of words as the Knight, talk in this manner: While he was preparing—an accident happened—? As if one should say of that unfortunate divine, Dr. Dodd, an *accident* proved fatal to him; he *happened* to write another man's name, etc.

'Qu. ii. Would not Sir John have told us the name of the person who is so darkly described in this narration? He is not usually backward in mentioning people's names at full length, where anything is to be said to their credit.

'Qu. iii. Would he not have told us something more about the important paper of a public nature, which he missed after receiving a visit from Mr. Anonymous; or would

he not rather have inserted it in the Life, as it probably would have filled a page or two?

'Qu. iv. Where was this parchment-covered book, which Sir John *happened* to lay his fingers upon? Was it lying carelessly about in the room, or *concealed in a desk*? In short, was it in such a place that a common acquaintance, as I suppose Mr. Anonymous is represented, could have easily carried it off?

'Qu. v. How did Johnson learn (not surely from his eyesight), before the Knight could convey his prize away (*CONVEY the Wise it call*), that his friend was taking such kind care of his property? You see, Mr. Urban, how miserably this story hangs together.

'Qu. vi. If the fact was exactly as it is here stated, how came Johnson to be so exceedingly provoked, that, as we are left to collect from the sequel, the Knight durst not approach him till he was appeased by a penitential letter?

'Qu. vii. What is become of this penitential letter? and how happens it to be omitted, if such a letter was ever written? Sir John would certainly have *fed us with so nourishing a morsel* (*Life*, p. 46) in a genuine account of this *accident*, partly to swell the volume, and partly to furnish the world with a *perfect model of precatory eloquence* (*Ib.* p. 270).

'Qu. viii. Would not the Knight also have favoured us with Johnson's answer in detail, without apologizing for the omission, by saying, that it would render him suspected of inexcusable vanity? If the answer was, as the defenders of the authen-

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition, 6th.

a look of great contempt, and ridiculed the judging of his disorder by the pulse. He complained, that the sarcocele<sup>1</sup> had again made its appearance, and asked, if a puncture would not relieve him, as it had done the year before: the doctor answered, that it might, but that his surgeon was the best judge of the effect of such an operation. Johnson, upon this, said, 'How many men in a year die through the timidity of those whom they consult for health! I want length of life, and you fear giving me pain, which I care not for<sup>2</sup>.'

8th. I visited him with Mr. Langton, and found him dictating to Mr. Strahan another will, the former being, as he had said at the time of making it, a temporary one. On our entering the room, he said, 'God bless you both.' I arrived just time enough to direct the execution, and also the attestation of it. After he had published it, he desired Mr. Strahan to say the Lord's prayer, which he did, all of us joining. Johnson, after it, uttered, extempore, a few pious ejaculations.

9th. I saw him in the evening, and found him dictating, to Mr. Strahan, a codicil to the will he had made the evening before. I assisted them in it, and received from the testator a direction, to insert a devise to his executors of the house at Lichfield, to be sold for the benefit of certain of his relations, a bequest of sundry pecuniary and specific legacies, a provision for the annuity of 70*l.* for Francis, and, after all, a devise of all the rest, residue, and remainder of his estate and effects, to his executors, in trust for the said Francis Barber, his executors and administrators; and, having dictated accordingly, Johnson executed and published it as a codicil to his will<sup>3</sup>.

ticity of this paragraph, I am told, affirm it was, *melius est poenituisse quam nunquam peccasse*, it must be owned that it is enough to make anybody vain. I shall attempt a translation for the benefit of your mere English readers: *There is more joy over a sinner that repenteth than over a just person that needeth no repentance.* And we know, from an authority not to be disputed, that Johnson was a great lover of peni-

tents (*Life*, iv. 406 [*ante*, ii. 114]).

"God put it in thy mind to take it hence,

That thou might'st win the more thy [Johnson's] love,

Pleading so wisely in excuse of it."

2 *Hen. IV.*

*Gent. Mag.* 1787, pp. 751-3, and *Porson Tracts*, p. 341.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 239.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iv. 399, n. 6; *ante*, i. 448.

<sup>3</sup> Leigh Hunt, in a marginal note,

He

He was now so weak as to be unable to kneel, and lamented, that he must pray sitting, but, with an effort, he placed himself on his knees, while Mr. Strahan repeated the Lord's Prayer. During the whole of the evening, he was much composed and resigned. Being become very weak and helpless, it was thought necessary that a man should watch with him all night; and one was found in the neighbourhood, who, for half a crown a night, undertook to sit up with, and assist him. When the man had left the room, he, in the presence and hearing of Mr. Strahan and Mr. Langton, asked me, where I meant to bury him. I answered, doubtless, in Westminster abbey: 'If,' said he, 'my executors think it proper to mark the spot of my interment by a stone, let it be so placed as to protect my body from injury.' I assured him it should be done. Before my departure, he desired Mr. Langton to put into my hands, money to the amount of upwards of 100*l.* with a direction to keep it till called for<sup>1</sup>.

10th. This day at noon I saw him again. He said to me, that the male nurse to whose care I had committed him, was unfit for the office. 'He is,' said he, 'an idiot, as awkward as a turnspit just put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse<sup>2</sup>.' Mr. Cruikshank came into the room, and, looking at his scarified leg, saw no sign of a mortification.

11th. At noon, I found him dozing, and would not disturb him.

12th. Saw him again; found him very weak, and, as he said, unable to pray.

13th. At noon, I called at the house, but went not into his room, being told that he was dozing. I was further informed

says:—'The omission of Boswell's name in Johnson's will is remarkable, and I cannot but think, very damaging.' *A Shelf of Old Books*, by Mrs. James T. Fields, 1895, p. 174.

Leigh Hunt should have noticed, what Boswell points out, that Adams, Burney, Hector and Murphy were also omitted. *Life*, iv. 404, *n.* To these might be added Mrs. Carter, Miss Burney, and Hannah More, and his friends at Lichfield. It will

be found that all his bequests of friendship were to persons (with the possible exception of W. G. Hamilton) whom he had seen during the last days of his life. He had seen Dr. Burney; his omission was probably due to the forgetfulness of a dying man.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson in his will mentions '£100 now lying by me in ready money.' *Life*, iv. 402, *n.* 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iv. 411.

by

by the servants, that his appetite was totally gone, and that he could take no sustenance. At eight in the evening, of the same day, word was brought me by Mr. Sastres, to whom, in his last moments, he uttered these words 'Jam moriturus',<sup>1</sup> that, at a quarter past seven, he had, without a groan, or the least sign of pain or uneasiness, yielded his last breath.

At eleven, the same evening, Mr. Langton came to me, and, in an agony of mind, gave me to understand, that our friend had wounded himself in several parts of the body<sup>2</sup>. I was shocked at the news; but, upon being told that he had not touched any vital part, was easily able to account for an action, which would else have given us the deepest concern. The fact was, that conceiving himself to be full of water, he had done that, which he had often solicited his medical assistants to do, made two or three incisions in his lower limbs, vainly hoping for some relief from the flux that might follow.

Early the next morning, Frank came to me; and, being desirous of knowing all the particulars of this transaction, I interrogated him very strictly concerning it, and received from him answers to the following effect:

That, at eight in the morning of the preceding day, upon going into the bedchamber, his master, being in bed, ordered him to open a cabinet, and give him a drawer in it; that he did so, and that out of it his master took a case of lancets, and choosing one of them, would have conveyed it into the bed, which Frank, a young man<sup>3</sup> that sat up with him, seeing, they seized his hand, and intreated him not to do a rash action: he said he would not; but drawing his hand under the bed-clothes, they saw his arm move. Upon this they turned down the clothes, and saw a great effusion of blood, which soon stopped—That soon after, he got at a pair of scissars that lay in a drawer by him, and plunged them deep in the calf of each leg—That immediately they sent for Mr. Cruikshank, and the apothecary, and they, or one of them, dressed the wounds—That he then fell into that dozing which carried him off.—That it was conjectured he lost eight or ten ounces of blood; and that this

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 418; *ante*, ii. 7, and  
*post* p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iv. 418 n.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Windham's man. *Ib.* iv. 418.  
effusion

effusion brought on the dozing, though his pulse continued firm till three o'clock.

That this act was not done to hasten his end, but to discharge the water that he conceived to be in him, I have not the least doubt<sup>1</sup>. A dropsy was his disease; he looked upon himself as a bloated carcase; and, to attain the power of easy respiration, would have undergone any degree of temporary pain. He dreaded neither punctures nor incisions, and, indeed, defied the trochar<sup>2</sup> and the lancet; he had often reproached his physicians and surgeon with cowardice; and, when Mr. Cruikshank scarified his leg, he cried out—'Deeper, deeper;—I will abide the consequence: you are afraid of your reputation, but that is nothing to me.'—To those about him, he said,—'You all pretend to love me, but you do not love me so well as I myself do.'

I have been thus minute in recording the particulars of his last moments, because I wished to attract attention to the conduct of this great man, under the most trying circumstances human nature is subject to. Many persons have appeared possessed of more serenity of mind in this awful scene: some have remained unmoved at the dissolution of the vital union; and, it may be deemed a discouragement from the severe practice of religion, that Dr. Johnson, whose whole life was a preparation for his death, and a conflict with natural infirmity, was disturbed with terror at the prospect of the grave. Let not this relax the circumspection of any one. It is true, that natural firmness of spirit, or the confidence of hope, may buoy up the mind to the last; but, however heroic an undaunted death may appear, it is not what we should pray for. As Johnson lived the life of the righteous, his end was that of a Christian: he strictly fulfilled the injunction of the apostle, to work out his salvation with fear and trembling<sup>3</sup>; and, though his doubts and

<sup>1</sup> 'This bold experiment,' writes Boswell, 'Sir John Hawkins has related in such a manner as to suggest a charge against Johnson of intentionally hastening his end; a charge so very inconsistent with his character in every respect, that it is injurious even to refute it, as Sir John has

thought it necessary to do. It is evident, that what Johnson did in hopes of relief indicated an extraordinary eagerness to retard his dissolution.' *Life*, iv. 399, n. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson defines *trocar* as 'a surgical instrument.'

<sup>3</sup> Philippians ii. 12.



scruples were certainly very distressing to himself, they give his friends a pious hope, that he, who added to almost all the virtues of Christianity, that religious humility which its great Teacher inculcated, will, in the fullness of time, receive the reward promised to a patient continuance in well-doing.

A few days after his departure, Dr. Brocklesby and Mr. Cruikshank, who, with great assiduity and humanity, (and I must add, generosity, for neither they, nor Dr. Heberden, Dr. Warren, nor Dr. Butter, would accept any fees<sup>1</sup>) had attended him, signified a wish, that his body might be opened. This was done, and the report made was to this effect :

Two of the valves of the aorta ossified.

The air-cells of the lungs unusually distended.

One of the kidneys destroyed by the pressure of the water.

The liver schirrous.

A stone in the gall-bladder, of the size of a common gooseberry.

On Monday the 20th of December, his funeral was celebrated and honoured by a numerous attendance of his friends, and among them, by particular invitation, of as many of the literary club as were then in town, and not prevented by engagements<sup>2</sup>. The dean of Westminster, upon my application, would gladly have performed the ceremony of his interment, but, at the time, was much indisposed in his health ; the office, therefore, devolved upon the senior prebendary, Dr. Taylor, who performed it with becoming gravity and seriousness. All the prebendaries, except such as were absent in the country, attended in their surplices and hoods: they met the corpse at the west door of

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, in his *Life of Garth*, says:—‘ I believe every man has found in physicians great liberality and dignity of sentiment, very prompt effusion of beneficence, and willingness to exert a lucrative art, where there is no hope of lucre.’

‘ I have been so ill,’ wrote Hannah More, ‘ that my friends have sent Dr. Warren to me. He is a most agreeable, as well as able man; pays

me every attention, but will never take a fee. This is uniformly the case whatever physician I consult, and I have consulted all that are eminent.’ H. More’s *Memoirs*, ii. 433. There is no reason to believe that the physicians of the present age fall short of those whose beneficence Johnson and Hannah More celebrated.

<sup>2</sup> For a list of those who attended their

their church, and performed, in the most respectful manner, all the honours due to the memory of so great a man<sup>1</sup>.

His body, enclosed in a leaden coffin, is deposited in the south transept of the abbey, near the foot of Shakespeare's monument, and close to the coffin of his friend Garrick. Agreeable to his request, a stone of black marble<sup>2</sup> covers his grave, thus inscribed :

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D.

Obiit XIII die Decembris,

Anno Domini

M DCC LXXXIV,

Ætatis suæ LXXV. (Page 594.)

The truth of the matter is, that his whole life was a conflict with his passions and humours, and that few persons bore reprehension with more patience than himself. After his decease, I found among his papers an anonymous letter, that seemed to have been written by a person who had long had his eye on him, and remarked the offensive particulars in his behaviour, his propensity to contradiction, his want of deference to the opinions of others, his contention for victory over those with whom he disputed, his local prejudices and aversions, and other his evil habits in conversation, which made his acquaintance

see *post* in G. Steevens's *Anecdotes*, and *Letters*, ii. 434. Of the members of the Literary Club who did not attend the following is the list in the order of their seniority :—

Bishop Percy.  
Sir Robert Chambers.  
Earl of Charlemont.  
Sir William Jones (absent in India).  
Agmondesham Vesey.  
James Boswell.  
Charles James Fox.  
Dr. George Fordyce.  
Edward Gibbon.  
Adam Smith.  
Bishop Barnard.  
Dr. Joseph Warton.  
Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Earl of Upper Ossory.

Bishop Marlay.

Earl Spencer.

Bishop Shipley.

Lord Eliot.

Thomas Warton.

Earl of Lucan.

Sir William Hamilton.

Viscount Palmerston.

Dr. Warren was elected a member three days after the funeral.

<sup>1</sup> This is Hawkins's reply to the charge of neglect brought against them and him. *Ante*, i. 449 *n.* ; *Life*, iv. 420 *n.*

<sup>2</sup> Boswell correctly describes it as 'a large blue flag-stone.' *Life*, iv. 419.

shunned

shunned by many, who, as a man of genius and worth, highly esteemed him. It was written with great temper, in a spirit of charity, and with a due acknowledgment of those great talents with which he was endowed, but contained in it several home truths. In short, it was such a letter as many a one, on the receipt of it, would have destroyed. On the contrary, Johnson preserved it, and placed it in his bureau, in a situation so obvious, that, whenever he opened that repository of his papers, it might look him in the face; and I have not the least doubt, that he frequently perused and reflected on its contents, and endeavoured to correct his behaviour by an address which he could not but consider as a friendly admonition. (Page 601.)

## ANECDOTES BY MISS HAWKINS<sup>1</sup>

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WHEN first I remember Johnson I used to see him sometimes at a little distance from the house, coming to call on my father ; his look directed downwards, or rather in such apparent abstraction as to have no direction. His walk was heavy, but he got on at a great rate, his left arm always fixed across his breast, so as to bring the hand under his chin ; and he walked wide, as if to support his weight<sup>2</sup>. Getting out of a hackney-coach, which had set him down in Fleet Street, my brother Henry says he made his way up Bolt Court in the zig-zag direction of a flash of lightning ; submitting his course only to the deflections imposed by the impossibility of going further to right or left.

His clothes hung loose, and the pocket on the right hand swung violently, the lining of his coat being always visible. I can now call to mind his brown hand, his metal sleeve-buttons, and my surprise at seeing him with plain wristbands, when all gentlemen wore ruffles<sup>3</sup> ; his coat-sleeve being very wide showed his linen almost to the elbow. His wig in common was cut and bushy ; if by chance he had one that had been dressed in separate curls, it gave him a disagreeable look, not suited to his years or character. I certainly had no idea that this same Dr. Johnson,

<sup>1</sup> From the *Memoirs of Letitia Hawkins*, 2 vols. 8vo. 1827.

<sup>2</sup> 'When he walked, it was like the struggling gait of one in fetters.' *Life*, iv. 425. See *post*, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> For 'the very rich laced ruffles,

which Mrs. Thrale said were old-fashioned,' worn by Sir P. J. Clerk, see *Life*, iv. 80. Clerk was a Whig. 'Ah, Sir (said Johnson), ancient ruffles and modern principles do not agree.'

whom

whom I thought rather a disgraceful visitor at our house, and who was never mentioned by ladies but with a smile, was to be one day an honour not only to us but to his country.

I remember a tailor's bringing his pattern-book to my brothers, and pointing out a purple, such as no one else wore, as the doctor's usual choice<sup>1</sup>. We all shouted with astonishment, at hearing that Polypheme, as, shame to say, we had nicknamed him, ever had a new coat; but the tailor assured us he was a good customer. (Vol. i. p. 86.)

On the death of Mr. Thrale it was concluded by some that he would marry the widow; by others that he would entirely take up his residence in her house, which, resembling the situation of many other learned men<sup>2</sup>, would have been nothing extraordinary or censurable. The path he would pursue was not evident, when on a sudden he came out again, and sought my father with kind eagerness. Calls were exchanged; he would now take his tea with us; and in one of these evening visits, which were the pleasantest periods of my knowledge of him, saying, when taking leave, that he was leaving London, Lady H. said, 'I suppose you are going to Bath?' 'Why should you suppose so?' said he. 'Because,' said my mother, 'I hear Mrs. Thrale is gone there<sup>3</sup>.' 'I know nothing of Mrs. Thrale,' he roared out; 'good evening to you.' The state of affairs was soon made known. (Vol. i. p. 96.)

It is greatly to the honour of Johnson that he never accustomed himself 'to descant'<sup>4</sup> on the ingratitude of mankind, or to comment on the many causes he had to think harshly of the world. He said once to my youngest brother, 'I hate a complainer<sup>5</sup>;' this hatred might preserve him from the habit. (Vol. i. p. 97.)

To Warburton's great powers he did full justice. He did not

<sup>1</sup> It was a brown coat that he usually wore. 'He never deviated from a dark colour.' *Life*, i. 396; iii. 54, n. 2, 325.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Watts, for instance. *Works*, viii. 383.

<sup>3</sup> She was married to Mr. Piozzi

in Bath. *Letters*, ii. 404, n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> 'Descant on mine own infirmity.' *Richard III*, Act i. sc. 1. l. 27.

<sup>5</sup> 'Sir, I have never complained of the world; nor do I think that I have reason to complain.' *Life*, iv. 116. See also *ante*, i. 263.

always,

always, my brother says, agree with him in his notions; 'but,' said he, 'with all his errors, *si non errasset, fecerat ille minus*.' Speaking of Warburton's contemptuous treatment of some one who presumed to differ from him, I heard him repeat with such glee the coarse expressions in which he had vented this feeling, that there could be no doubt of his hearty approbation <sup>1</sup>. (Vol. i. p. 108.)

Mrs. Anna Williams I remember as long as I can remember any one. . . . I see her now, a pale shrunken old lady, dressed in scarlet <sup>2</sup> made in the handsome French fashion of the time, with a lace cap, with two stiffened projecting wings on the temples, and a black lace hood over it; her grey or powdered hair appearing. Her temper has been recorded as marked with the Welsh fire, and this might be excited by some of the meaner inmates of the upper floors; but her gentle kindness to me I never shall forget, or think consistent with a bad temper <sup>3</sup>. (Vol. i. p. 151.)

What the economy of Dr. Johnson's house might be under his wife's administration, I cannot tell; but under Miss Williams's management, and, indeed, afterwards, when he was even more at the mercy of those around him, it always exceeded my expectation, as far as the condition of the apartment into which I was admitted could enable me to judge. It was not, indeed, his study: amongst his books he probably might bring Magliabecchi <sup>4</sup> to recollection; but I saw him only in a decent drawing-room of a house not inferior to others in the same local situation, and with stout old-fashioned mahogany chairs and tables <sup>5</sup>. I have said that he was a liberal customer to his tailor, and I can remember that his linen was often a strong contrast to the colour of his hands <sup>6</sup>. (Vol. i. p. 208.)

<sup>1</sup> 'JOHNSON. "When I read Warburton first, and observed his force and his contempt of mankind, I thought he had driven the world before him; but I soon found that was not the case; for Warburton, by extending his abuse, rendered it ineffectual."' *Life*, v. 93. See also *ante*, i. 381 n.; ii. 15 n.

<sup>2</sup> For Hannah More 'all gorgeous in scarlet' see *Life*, iv. 325, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> For Miss Williams's temper see *ib.* iii. 26, 220.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, ii. 87.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, ii. 135.

<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless Johnson owned that he 'had no passion for clean linen.' *Ib.* i. 397.

In his colloquial intercourse, Johnson's compliments were studied, and therefore lost their effect: his head dipped lower; the semicircle in which it revolved was of greater extent; and his roar was deeper in its tone when he meant to be civil. His movement in reading, which he did with great rapidity, was humorously described after his death, by a lady, who said, that 'his head swung seconds'.<sup>1</sup>

The usual initial sentences of his conversation led some to imagine that to resemble him was as easy as to mimic him, and that, if they began with 'Why, Sir,' or 'I know no reason,' or 'If any man chooses to think,' or 'If you mean to say,' they must, of course, 'talk Johnson'.<sup>2</sup> That his style might be imitated, is true; and that its strong features made it easier to lay hold on it than on a milder style, no one will dispute. (Vol. i. p. 215.)

For the following trifling circumstances connected with Dr. Johnson I am indebted to my younger brother. 'Speaking of reading and study, I heard him say, that he would not ask a man to give up his important interests for them, because it would not be fair; but that, if any man would employ in reading that time which he would otherwise waste, he would answer for it, if he were a man of ordinary endowment, that he would make a sensible man. "He might not," said he, "make a Bentley, but he would be a sensible man".'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'He commonly held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner.' *Life*, i. 485.

<sup>2</sup> For imitations of him see *ib.* ii. 326, *n.* 5, and for his 'No, Sir,' *ib.* iv. 315.

<sup>3</sup> 'We see the eyes and mouth moving with convulsive twitches; we see the heavy form rolling; we hear it puffing; and then comes the "Why, sir!" and the "What then, sir?" and the "No, sir!" and the "You don't see your way through the question, sir!"' Macaulay's *Essays*, ed. 1843, i. 407.

'Imitation is of two sorts; the first is when we force to our own purposes the thoughts of others; the second consists in copying the imperfections or blemishes of celebrated authors. I have seen a play professedly writ in the style of Shakespeare, wherein the resemblance lay in one single line,

'And so good morrow t' ye, good master lieutenant.'

Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xxiii. 53. According to Lamb the writer of this play was Rowe. *Letters of Charles Lamb*, ed. 1888, i. 138.

<sup>3</sup> 'Snatches of reading (said John-  
'He

'He was adverse to departing from the common opinions and customs of the world, as conceiving them to have been founded on experience<sup>1</sup>.'

'He doubted whether there ever was a man who was not gratified by being told that he was liked by the women.'

'He was speaking of surgical operations. I suggested that they were now performed with less pain than formerly, owing to modern improvements in science. "Yes, Sir," said he, "but if you will conceive a wedge placed with the broad end downwards," alluding to the drawing of a tooth, "no human power, nor angel, as *I* conceive, can extract that wedge without giving pain<sup>2</sup>."

'He spoke contemptuously of the habit of corresponding by letter, and of professing to *pour out one's soul* upon paper<sup>3</sup>. Calling upon him shortly after the death of Lord Mansfield, and mentioning the event, he said, "Ah, Sir! there was little learning and less virtue<sup>4</sup>." (Vol. i. p. 216.)

son) will not make a Bentley or a Clarke. They are, however, in a certain degree advantageous.' *Life*, iv. 21.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, i. 221.

<sup>2</sup> When Johnson was suffering from a sarcocele (*Life*, iv. 239) he was attended by Percival Pott, one of the first surgeons of the day. When in 1749 Pott was appointed surgeon of St. Bartholomew's Hospital 'the maxim *Dolor medicina doloris* still remained unrefuted. Mr. Pott's tutor treated with supercilious contempt the endeavours of his pupil to recommend a milder system. Mr. Pott lived to see those remains of barbarism set aside.' J. Earle's *Life of Pott*. 'Pott directed those who tried to bring back Dodd to life after his execution.' Wheatley's *Wraxall's Memoirs*, iv. 249.

<sup>3</sup> 'It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in

their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children.' *Works*, viii. 314. See *Letters*, ii. 52, and *Life*, iv. 102.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Mansfield died on March 20, 1793, outliving Johnson by more than eight years. In spite of this gross blunder it is quite possible that Johnson thus spoke of him. Boswell says that 'Johnson entertained no exalted opinion of his Lordship's intellectual character. Talking of him to me one day he said:—"It is wonderful, Sir, with how little real superiority of mind men can make an eminent figure in publick life."' *Life*, iv. 178. Smollett's praise of Mansfield perhaps implies that he had no great learning; for he says that he had 'an innate sagacity that saved the trouble of intense applica-

My



My father and Boswell grew a little acquainted ; and when the Life of their friend came out, Boswell showed himself very uneasy under an injury, which he was much embarrassed in defining. He called on my father, and being admitted, complained of the manner in which he was enrolled amongst Johnson's friends, which was as Mr. James Boswell of Auchinleck<sup>1</sup>. Where was the offence ? It was one of those which a complainant hardly dares to embody in words : he would only repeat, 'Well, but *Mr. James Boswell!* surely, surely, *Mr. James Boswell!!*' . . . 'I know,' said my father, 'Mr. Boswell, what you mean ; you would have had me say that Johnson undertook this tour with THE BOSWELL.' He could not indeed absolutely covet this mode of proclamation ; he would perhaps have been content with 'the celebrated,' or 'the well-known,' but he could not confess quite so much ; he therefore acquiesced in the amendment proposed, but he was forced to depart without any promise of correction in a subsequent edition. (Vol. i. p. 235.)

tion.' *History of England*, ed. 1800, iii. 239. See Hume's *Letters to Strahan*, p. 125, n. 13.

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins described him as 'Mr. James Boswell, a native of Scotland.' *Hawkins*, p. 472. Boswell in return, in enumerating the members of the Ivy Lane Club, described him as

'Mr. John Hawkins, an attorney.' *Life*, i. 190. See *ante*, ii. 36, in Boswell's letter to Malone of March 8, 1791, where he tells how he has got the printer of the *Oracle* to promise to mention that some lines *by Mr. Boswell* are not *by James Boswell, Esq.* See also *Life*, ii. 382, n. 1.

## NARRATIVE BY JOHN HOOLE

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[Published in the *European Magazine* for September, 1779, p. 153.

For John Hoole, see *Life*, ii. 289; iv. 70.

Lamb wrote in 1797: 'Fairfax I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson in his *Life of Waller* gives a most delicious specimen of him, and adds, in the true manner of that delicate critic, as well as amiable man, "It may be presumed that this old version will not be much read after the elegant translation of my friend, Mr. Hoole." I endeavoured—I wished to gain some idea of Tasso from this Mr. Hoole, the great boast and ornament of the India House, but soon desisted. I found him more vapid than small beer "sun-vinegared."'

What Johnson wrote was: 'Fairfax's work, after Mr. Hoole's translation, will perhaps not be soon reprinted.' *Works*, vii. 216.

Lady Louisa Stuart writing to Sir Walter Scott on Feb. 10, 1817, thus describes Hoole:—'He once fell in my way near thirty years ago. He was a clerk in the India House, a man of business of that ancient breed, now extinct, which used to be as much marked by plaited cambric ruffles, a neat wig, a snuff-coloured suit of clothes, and a corresponding sobriety of look, as one race of spaniels is by the black nose and silky hair. "When I have been long otherwise employed, and out of the habit of writing verse," said he, "I find it rather difficult and get on slowly; but

after a little practice I fall into the track again ; then I can easily make a hundred lines in a day." ' *Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1894, i. 409.]

SATURDAY, Nov. 20, 1784.—This evening, about eight o'clock, I paid a visit to my dear friend Dr. Johnson, whom I found very ill and in great dejection of spirits. We had a most affecting conversation on the subject of religion, in which he exhorted me, with the greatest warmth of kindness, to attend closely to every religious duty, and particularly enforced the obligation of private prayer and receiving the Sacrament. He desired me to stay that night and join in prayer with him ; adding, that he always went to prayer every night with his man Francis. He conjured me to read and meditate upon the Bible, and not to throw it aside for a play or a novel. He said he had himself lived in great negligence of religion and worship for forty years ; that he had neglected to read his Bible, and had often reflected what he could hereafter say when he should be asked why he had not read it<sup>1</sup>. He begged me repeatedly to let his present situation have due effect upon me ; and advised me, when I got home, to note down in writing what had passed between us, adding, that what a man writes in that manner dwells upon his mind. He said many things that I cannot now recollect, but all delivered with the utmost fervour of religious zeal and personal affection. Between nine and ten o'clock his servant Francis came upstairs : he then said we would all go to prayers, and, desiring me to kneel down by his bedside, he repeated several prayers with great devotion. I then took my leave. He then pressed me to think of all he had said, and to commit it to writing. I assured him I would. He seized my hand with much warmth, and repeated, ' Promise me you will do it : ' on which we parted, and I engaged to see him the next day.

<sup>1</sup> In 1772 he recorded, after reading the Bible through :—' It is a comfort to me that at last, in my sixty-third year, I have attained to

know, even thus hastily, confusedly, and imperfectly, what my Bible contains.' *Ante*, i. 61.

Sunday, Nov. 21.—About noon I again visited him; found him rather better and easier, his spirits more raised, and his conversation more disposed to general subjects. When I came in, he asked if I had done what he desired (meaning the noting down what passed the night before); and upon my saying that I had, he pressed my hand and said earnestly, 'Thank you.' Our discourse then grew more cheerful. He told me, with apparent pleasure, that he heard the Empress of Russia had ordered *The Rambler* to be translated into the Russian language, and that a copy would be sent him<sup>1</sup>.

Before we parted, he put into my hands a little book, by Fleetwood, on the Sacrament<sup>2</sup>, which he told me he had been the means of introducing to the University of Oxford by recommending it to a young student there.

Monday, Nov. 22.—Visited the Doctor: found him seemingly better of his complaints, but extremely low and dejected. I sat by him till he fell asleep, and soon after left him, as he seemed little disposed to talk; and, on my going away, he said, emphatically, 'I am very poorly indeed!'

Tuesday, Nov. 23.—Called about eleven: the Doctor not up: Mrs. Gardiner<sup>3</sup> in the dining-room: the Doctor soon came to us, and seemed more cheerful than the day before. He spoke of his design to invite a Mrs. Hall<sup>4</sup> to be with him, and to offer her

<sup>1</sup> He had been misinformed. *Life*, iv. 277. An anonymous correspondent from St. Petersburg informs me that 'a very complete condensation of Boswell's *Johnson* was published in Russian by a distinguished critic, Drujinine, in 1851 and 1852. It has been republished in his complete works, 1865, and is included in the first 245 close-printed pages of vol. iv.'

*The Wealth of Nations* was translated into Russian nineteen years after Johnson's death, and at once raised the question of 'the relative advantages of free and servile labour in agriculture.' Kovalevsky's *Modern*

*Customs and Ancient Laws of Russia*, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *The Reasonable Communicant*, by W. Fleetwood, D.D., late Lord Bishop of Ely, 1704. Fleetwood was born in 1656 and died in 1723. The following passage in this work is opposed to the common opinion of the heavy breakfasts of our forefathers:—'I do not suppose that any one makes a full meal in the morning, that is not going to strong Labour, much less upon Sunday.' 16th ed. 1748, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 80.

<sup>4</sup> John Wesley's sister. *Life*, iv. 92.

Mrs. Williams's room. Called again about three: found him quite oppressed with company that morning, therefore left him directly.

Wednesday, Nov. 24.—Called about seven in the evening: found him very ill and very low indeed. He said a thought had struck him that his rapid decline of health and strength might be partly owing to the town air, and spoke of getting a lodging at Islington, I sat with him till past nine, and then took my leave.

Thursday, Nov. 25.—About three in the afternoon was told that he desired that day to see no company. In the evening, about eight, called with Mr. Nicol<sup>1</sup>, and, to our great surprise, we found him then setting out for Islington, to the Rev. Mr. Strahan's<sup>2</sup>. He could scarce speak. We went with him down the court to the coach. He was accompanied by his servant Frank and Mr. Lowe the painter<sup>3</sup>. I offered myself to go with him but he declined it.

Friday, Nov. 26.—Called at his house about eleven: heard he was much better, and had a better night than he had known a great while, and was expected home that day. Called again in the afternoon—not so well as he was, nor expected home that night.

Saturday, Nov. 27.—Called again about noon: heard he was much worse: went immediately to Islington, where I found him extremely bad, and scarce able to speak, with the asthma. Sir John Hawkins, the Rev. Mr. Strahan, and Mrs. Strahan, were with him. Observing that we said little, he desired that we would not constrain ourselves, though he was not able to talk with us. Soon after he said he had something to say to Sir John Hawkins, on which we immediately went down into the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Nicol, of Pall Mall. HOOLE. The King's bookseller. *Life*, iv. 251; *Letters*, ii. 438.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. George Strahan, Vicar of Islington. *Life*, iv. 271, 416; *Letters*, ii. 88.

John Nichols, writing of himself, says:—'In the summer of 1803 he

withdrew from the trammels of business to a house in his native village [Islington].'*Lit. Hist.* viii. Preface, p. 5. Nineteen years earlier Islington, when Johnson visited it for change of air, was still less a part of London.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iii. 324; iv. 202.

parlour.

parlour. Sir John soon followed us, and said he had been speaking about his will<sup>1</sup>. Sir John started the idea of proposing to him to make it on the spot; that Sir John should dictate it, and that I should write it. He went up to propose it, and soon came down with the Doctor's acceptance. The will was then begun; but before we proceeded far, it being necessary, on account of some alteration, to begin again, Sir John asked the Doctor whether he would choose to make any introductory declaration respecting his faith. The Doctor said he would. Sir John further asked if he would make any declaration of his being of the church of England: to which the Doctor said 'No!' but, taking a pen, he wrote on a paper the following words, which he delivered to Sir John, desiring him to keep it:—'I commit to the infinite mercies of Almighty God my soul, polluted<sup>2</sup> with many sins; but purified, I trust, with repentance and the death of Jesus Christ.' While he was at Mr. Strahan's, Dr. Brocklesby came in, and Dr. Johnson put the question to him, whether he thought he could live six weeks? to which Dr. Brocklesby returned a very doubtful answer<sup>3</sup>, and soon left us. After dinner the will was finished, and about six we came to town in Sir John Hawkins's carriage; Sir John, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Ryland<sup>4</sup> (who came in after dinner), and myself. The Doctor appeared much better in the way home, and talked pretty cheerfully<sup>5</sup>. Sir John took leave of us at the end of Bolt Court, and Mr. Ryland and myself went to his house with the Doctor, who began to grow very ill again. Mr. Ryland soon left us, and I remained with the Doctor till Mr. Sastres<sup>6</sup> came in. We stayed with him about an hour, when we left him on his saying he had some business to do. Mr. Sastres and myself went together homewards, discoursing

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 404, 440. To the instances given there of the use of *polluted* I would add the following by Johnson.—'Pollute his canvas with deformity.' *Ib.* i. 330. 'Dryden seldom *pollutes* his page with an adverse name.' *Works*, vii. 294.

'Pope *polluted* his will with female resentment.' *Ib.* viii. 307.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 122; *Life*, iv. 415.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, i. 56.

<sup>5</sup> 'In the way thither he appeared much at ease, and told stories.' *Ante*, ii. 126.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 292.

on the dangerous state of our friend, when it was resolved that Mr. Sastres should write to Heberden<sup>1</sup>; but going to his house that night, he fortunately found him at home, and he promised to be with Dr. Johnson next morning.

Sunday, Nov. 28.—Went to Dr. Johnson's about two o'clock: met Mrs. Hoole coming from thence, as he was asleep: took her back with me: found Sir John Hawkins with him. The Doctor's conversation tolerably cheerful. Sir John reminded him that he had expressed a desire to leave some small memorials to his friends, particularly a Polyglot Bible to Mr. Langton<sup>2</sup>; and asked if they should add the codicil then. The Doctor replied, 'he had forty things to add, but could not do it at that time.' Sir John then took his leave. Mr. Sastres came next into the dining-room, where I was with Mrs. Hoole. Dr. Johnson hearing that Mrs. Hoole was in the next room, desired to see her. He received her with great affection, took her by the hand, and said nearly these words:—'I feel great tenderness for you: think of the situation in which you see me, profit by it, and God Almighty keep you for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.' He then asked if we would both stay and dine with him. Mrs. Hoole said she could not; but I agreed to stay. Upon my saying to the Doctor that Dr. Heberden would be with him that morning, his answer was, 'God has called me, and Dr. Heberden comes too late.' Soon after this Dr. Heberden came. While he was there, we heard them, from the other room, in earnest discourse, and found that they were talking over the affair<sup>3</sup> of the K—g and C——n<sup>4</sup>. We overheard Dr. Heberden say, 'All you did was extremely proper.' After

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, ii. 95, n.; *Life*, iv. 228.

'Dr. Heberden (as every physician, to make himself talked of, will set up some new hypothesis) pretends that a damp house, and even damp sheets, which have ever been reckoned fatal, are wholesome; to prove his faith he went into his own new house totally unaided, and survived it.' Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 220. He survived it twenty-six years and died at the age of ninety-one—the Senior

Fellow of the College of Physicians. A. C. Buller's *Life of Heberden*, 1879, p. 17. For his house built on the site of Nell Gwynne's, see *Letters*, ii. 302, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> This was bequeathed. *Life*, iv. 402, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> 'This alludes to an application made for an increase to his pension, to enable him to go to Italy.' J. HOOLE. *Life*, iv. 326.

<sup>4</sup> 'Sic; but probably an error of Dr.

Dr. Heberden was gone, Mr. Sastres and I returned into the chamber. Dr. Johnson complained that sleep this day had powerful dominion over him, that he waked with great difficulty, and that probably he should go off in one of these paroxysms. Afterwards he said that he hoped his sleep was the effect of opium taken some days before, which might not be worked off. We dined together—the Doctor, Mr. Sastres, Mrs. Davies<sup>1</sup>, and myself. He ate a pretty good dinner with seeming appetite, but appearing rather impatient; and being asked unnecessary and frivolous questions, he said he often thought of Macbeth—‘Question enrages him<sup>2</sup>.’ He retired immediately after dinner, and we soon went, at his desire (Mr. Sastres and myself), and sat with him till tea. He said little, but dozed at times. At six he ordered tea for us, and we went out to drink it with Mrs. Davies; but the Doctor drank none. The Rev. Dr. Taylor, of Ashbourne, came soon after; and Dr. Johnson desired our attendance at prayers, which were read by Dr. Taylor<sup>3</sup>. Mr. Ryland came and sat some time with him: he thought him much better. Mr. Sastres and I continued with him the remainder of the evening, when he exhorted Mr. Sastres in nearly these words: ‘There is no one who has shown me more attention than you have done, and it is now right you should claim some attention from me. You are a young man, and are to struggle through life: you are in a profession that I dare say you will exercise with great fidelity and innocence; but let me exhort you always to think of my situation, which must one day be yours: always remember that life is short, and that eternity never ends! I say nothing of your religion; for if you conscientiously keep to it, I have little doubt but you may be saved: if you read the controversy, I think we have the right on our side; but if you do

the press for C——r, meaning the King and Lord Chancellor.’ Croker; *Life*, iv. 336, 348.

<sup>1</sup> Most probably ‘Mrs. Davis that was about Mrs. Williams.’ *Letters*, ii. 332. Perhaps however the wife of Tom Davies the bookseller. *Life*, i. 484.

<sup>2</sup> *Macbeth*, Act iii. sc. 4. l. 118.

For his dislike of questioning, see *Life*, ii. 472; iii. 268.

<sup>3</sup> This shows that Johnson’s quarrel with Dr. Taylor was made up. *Ante*, i. 96 n; *Letters*, ii. 426, n. 3. He did not however bequeath any memorial to him as he did to most of those whom he saw in his last days.

not



not read it, be not persuaded, from any worldly consideration, to alter the religion in which you were educated : change not, but from conviction of reason<sup>1</sup>.’ He then most strongly enforced the motives of virtue and piety from the consideration of a future state of reward and punishment, and concluded with ‘Remember all this, and God bless you! Write down what I have said—I think you are the third person I have bid do this<sup>2</sup>.’ At ten o’clock he dismissed us, thanking us for a visit which he said could not have been very pleasant to us.

Monday, Nov. 29.—Called with my son<sup>3</sup> about eleven : saw the Doctor, who said, ‘You must not now stay;’ but, as we were going away, he said, ‘I will get Mr. Hoole to come next Wednesday and read the Litany to me, and do you and Mrs. Hoole come with him.’ He appeared very ill. Returning from the city I called again to inquire, and heard that Dr. Butter<sup>4</sup> was with him. In the evening, about eight, called again and just saw him; but did not stay, as Mr. Langton was with him on business. I met Sir Joshua Reynolds going away<sup>5</sup>.

Tuesday, Nov. 30.—Called twice this morning, but did not see him : he was much the same. In the evening, between six and seven, went to his house : found there Mr. Langton, Mr. Sastres, and Mr. Ryland : the Doctor being asleep in the chamber, we went all to tea and coffee; when the Doctor came in to us rather cheerful, and entering said, ‘Dear gentlemen, how do you do?’ He drank coffee, and, in the course of the conversation, said that he recollected a poem of his, made some years ago on a young gentleman coming of age. He repeated the whole with great spirit : it consisted of about fifteen or sixteen stanzas of four lines, in alternate rhyme. He said he had only repeated it once since he composed it, and that he never gave but one copy<sup>6</sup>. He said several excellent things that evening, and among the rest, that ‘scruples made many men

<sup>1</sup> For conversions ‘from Protestantism to Popery,’ see *Life*, ii. 105.

<sup>2</sup> ‘The other two were Dr. Brocklesby and myself.’ J. HOOLE. *Life*, iv. 414.

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Samuel Hoole. *Life*, iv. 409.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* iii. 154.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* iv. 413.

<sup>6</sup> It was to Mrs. Thrale that he gave the copy. *Ante*, i. 281; *Letters*, ii. 190; *Life*, iv. 411.

miserable

miserable, but few men good'.<sup>1</sup> He spoke of the affectation that men had to accuse themselves of petty faults or weaknesses, in order to exalt themselves into notice for any extraordinary talents which they might possess; and instanced Waller, which he said he would record if he lived to revise his life. Waller was accustomed to say that his memory was so bad he would sometimes forget to repeat his grace at table, or the Lord's Prayer<sup>2</sup>, perhaps that people might wonder at what he did else of great moment; for the Doctor observed, that no man takes upon himself small blemishes without supposing that great abilities are attributed to him; and that, in short, this affectation of candour or modesty was but another kind of indirect self-praise, and had its foundation in vanity<sup>3</sup>. Frank bringing him a note, as he opened it he said an odd thought struck him, that 'one should receive no letters in the grave'<sup>4</sup>. His talk was in general very serious and devout, though occasionally cheerful: he said, 'You are all serious men, and I will tell you something. About two years since I feared that I had neglected God, and that then I had not a *mind* to give him: on which I set about to read Thomas a Kempis<sup>5</sup> in Low Dutch, which I accomplished,

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 38.

<sup>2</sup> 'Tout le monde se plaint de sa mémoire, et personne ne se plaint de son jugement.' La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes*, No. 89.

<sup>3</sup> 'All censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to show how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise, and all the reproach of falsehood.' *Life*, iii. 323.

<sup>4</sup> 'Nous n'avouons de petits défauts que pour persuader que nous n'en avons pas de grands.' La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes*, No. 334.

<sup>5</sup> 'This note was from Mr. Davies the bookseller, and mentioned a present of some pork; upon which the Doctor said, in a manner that seemed as if he thought it ill-timed, "Too much of this," or some such expression.' J. HOOLE. *Life*, iv. 413.

<sup>5</sup> 'He was,' says Hawkins (p. 544), 'for some time pleased with Kempis's tract *De Imitatione Christi*, but at length laid it aside, saying, that the main design of it was to promote monastic piety, and inculcate ecclesiastical obedience.'

Milman in his *History of Latin Christianity*, vi. 559, speaks of 'the sublime selfishness of the *Imitation of Christ*.' See also *ib.* p. 484. Thackeray wrote of it on Christmas Day, 1849:—'The scheme of that book carried out would make the world the most wretched, useless, dreary, doting place of sojourn—there would be no manhood, no love, no tender ties of mother and child, no use of intellect, no trade or science, a set of selfish beings crawling about avoiding one another and howling a perpetual *miserere*.'  
and

and thence I judged that my mind was not impaired, Low Dutch having no affinity with any of the languages which I knew <sup>1</sup>. With respect to his recovery, he seemed to think it hopeless. There was to be a consultation of physicians next day: he wished to have his legs scarified to let out the water; but this his medical friends opposed, and he submitted to their opinion, though he said he was not satisfied <sup>2</sup>. At half-past eight he dismissed us all but Mr. Langton. I first asked him if my son should attend him next day, to read the Litany, as he had desired; but he declined it on account of the expected consultation. We went away, leaving Mr. Langton and Mr. De Moulins <sup>3</sup>, a young man who was employed in copying his Latin epigrams <sup>4</sup>.

Wednesday, Dec. 1.—At his house in the evening: drank tea and coffee with Mr. Sastres, Mr. De Moulins, and Mr. Hall <sup>5</sup>: went into the Doctor's chamber after tea, when he gave me an epitaph to copy, written by him for his father, mother, and brother <sup>6</sup>. He continued much the same.

Thursday, Dec. 2.—Called in the morning, and left the epitaph: with him in the evening about seven; found Mr. Langton and Mr. De Moulins; did not see the Doctor; he was in his chamber, and afterwards engaged with Dr. Scott <sup>7</sup>.

Friday, Dec. 3.—Called; but he wished not to see anybody.

*Letters of W.M.Thackeray.* London, 1887, p. 96.

<sup>1</sup> It is strange that he should not see its close affinity with English. 'Mr. Burke justly observed that this was not the most vigorous trial, Low Dutch being a language so near to our own.' *Life*, iv. 21. 'JOHNSON. "English and High Dutch have no similarity to the eye, though radically the same. Once, when looking into Low Dutch, I found in a whole page only one word similar to English; *stroem* like *stream*, and it signified *tide*."' *Ib.* iii. 235. See also *ib.* ii. 263, and *ante*, i. 68.

<sup>2</sup> He had reproached Heberden with being *timidorum timidissimus*,

when he had expressed fears about the scarification. *Post* in Windham's *Diary*. Heberden, forty-two years earlier, had attended Bentley at his death, and had refused to bleed him, though the aged patient pressed him. Monk's *Bentley*, ii. 413.

<sup>3</sup> Four years earlier he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'Young Desmoulins is taken in *an under something* of Drury-lane.' *Letters*, ii. 73.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 445.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps a mistake for Mrs. Hall, Wesley's sister.

<sup>6</sup> He sent it to Lichfield the next day. *Life*, iv. 393.

<sup>7</sup> Afterwards Lord Stowell, one of his executors. *Ib.* iv. 402, n. 2.

Consultations

Consultations of physicians to be held that day: called again in the evening; found Mr. Langton with him; Mr. Sastres and I went together into his chamber; he was extremely low. 'I am very bad indeed, dear gentlemen,' he said; 'very bad, very low, very cold, and I think I find my life to fail.' In about a quarter of an hour he dismissed Mr. Sastres and me; but called me back again, and said that next Sunday, if he lived, he designed to take the sacrament, and wished me, my wife, and son to be there. We left Mr. Langton with him.

Saturday, Dec. 4.—Called on him about three: he was much the same; did not see him, he had much company that day. Called in the evening with Mr. Sastres about eight; found he was not disposed for company; Mr. Langton with him; did not see him.

Sunday, Dec. 5.—Went to Bolt Court with Mrs. Hoole after eleven; found there Sir John Hawkins, Rev. Mr. Strahan, Mrs. Gardiner, and Mr. De Moulins, in the dining-room. After some time the Doctor came to us from the chamber, and saluted us all, thanking us all for this visit to him. He said he found himself very bad, but hoped he should go well through the duty which he was about to do. The sacrament was then administered to all present, Frank being of the number<sup>1</sup>. The Doctor repeatedly desired Mr. Strahan to speak louder; seeming very anxious not to lose any part of the service, in which he joined in very great fervour of devotion. The service over, he again thanked us all for attending him on the occasion; he said he had taken some opium to enable him to support the fatigue: he seemed quite spent, and lay in his chair some time in a kind of doze: he then got up and retired into his chamber. Mr. Ryland then called on him. I was with them: he said to Mr. Ryland, 'I have taken my viaticum: I hope I shall arrive safe at the end of my journey, and be accepted at last.' He spoke very

<sup>1</sup> For the prayer which Johnson composed see *ante*, i. 121.

Hawkins, who said that Frank's 'first master had *in great humanity* made him a Christian,' and whose last words in his *Life of Johnson* are

a protest against 'ostentatious bounty and *javour to negroes*,' must, brutal fellow that he was, with great indignation have seen the black servant admitted. See also *ante*, ii. 124 n.; *Life*, iv. 441.

despondingly

despondingly several times: Mr. Ryland comforted him, observing that 'we had great hopes given us.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'we have hopes given us; but they are conditional, and I know not how far I have fulfilled those conditions<sup>1</sup>.' He afterwards said 'However, I think that I have now corrected all bad and vicious habits.' Sir Joshua Reynolds called on him: we left them together. Sir Joshua being gone, he called Mr. Ryland and me again to him: he continued talking very seriously, and repeated a prayer or collect with great fervour, when Mr. Ryland took his leave. My son came to us from his church: we were at dinner—Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Gardiner, myself, Mrs. Hoole, my son, and Mr. De Moulins. He ate a tolerable dinner, but retired directly after dinner. He had looked out a sermon of Dr. Clarke's<sup>2</sup>, 'On the Shortness of Life,' for me to read to him after dinner, but he was too ill to hear it. After six o'clock he called us all into his room, when he dismissed us for that night with a prayer, delivered as he sat in his great chair in the most fervent and affecting manner, his mind appearing wholly employed with the thoughts of another life. He told Mr. Ryland that he wished not to come to God with opium<sup>3</sup>, but that he hoped he had been properly attentive. He said before us all, that when he recovered the last spring, he had only called it a *reprieve*, but that he did think it was for a longer time; however he hoped the time that had been prolonged to him might be the means of bringing forth fruit meet for repentance.

Monday, Dec. 6.—Sent in the morning to make inquiry after him; he was much the same; called in the evening; found Mr. Cruikshanks<sup>4</sup> the surgeon with him; he said he had been that day quarrelling with all his physicians; he appeared in tolerable spirits.

Tuesday, Dec. 7.—Called at dinner time; saw him eat a very good dinner: he seemed rather better, and in spirits.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 299; *Letters*, ii. 380.

'Quid sum miser tunc dicturus,  
Quem patronum rogaturus,  
Quum vix justus sit securus?'

*Dies Irae.*

<sup>2</sup> Johnson 'had made it a rule not to admit Dr. Clarke's name in his

Dictionary,' but on his death-bed 'he pressed Dr. Brocklesby to read his sermons.' *Life*, iv. 416; *ante*, i. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 128.

<sup>4</sup> W. C. Cruikshank. *Life*, iv. 239.

Wednesday

Wednesday, Dec. 8.—Went with Mrs. Hoole and my son, by appointment: found him very poorly and low, after a very bad night. Mr. Nichols the printer was there<sup>1</sup>. My son read the Litany, the Doctor several times urging him to speak louder<sup>2</sup>. After prayers Mr. Langton came in: much serious discourse: he warned us all to profit by his situation; and, applying to me, who stood next him, exhorted me to lead a better life than he had done. 'A better life than you, my dear Sir!' I repeated. He replied warmly, 'Don't compliment now<sup>3</sup>.' He told Mr. Langton that he had the night before enforced on — 'a powerful argument to a powerful objection against Christianity.

He had often thought it might seem strange that the Jews, who refused belief to the doctrine supported by the miracles of our Saviour, should after his death raise a numerous church; but he said that they expected fully a temporal prince, and with this idea the multitude was actuated when they strewed his way with palm-branches on his entry into Jerusalem; but finding their expectations afterwards disappointed, rejected him, till in process of time, comparing all the circumstances and prophecies of the Old Testament, confirmed in the New, many were converted; that the Apostles themselves once believed him to be a temporal

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 407; for Nichols's particulars of his conversation. In the Preface to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1784, are given some verses by Nichols, where Johnson is mentioned, with this footnote on his name: 'To whom the writer of these lines had the pleasure of shewing them in the last interview with which he was honoured by this illustrious pattern of true piety. "Take care of your eternal salvation," and "Remember to observe the Sabbath; let it never be a day of business, nor wholly a day of dissipation," were parts of his last solemn farewell. "Let my words have their due weight," he added; "they are those of a dying man."'

<sup>2</sup> 'He more than once interrupted Mr. Hoole with, "Louder, my dear

Sir, louder, I entreat you, or you pray in vain."' Mr. Croker records the following communication from Mr. Hoole:—'When I called upon him, the morning after he had pressed me rather roughly to read *louder*, he said, "I was peevish yesterday; you must forgive me: when you are as old and as sick as I am, perhaps you may be peevish too." I have heard him make many apologies of this kind.' *Life*, iv. 409.

<sup>3</sup> 'Alas! when I receive these undue compliments, I am ready to answer with my old friend Johnson—"Sir, I am a miserable sinner."' Hannah More's *Memoirs*, ii. 437.

<sup>4</sup> See *post* in Mr. Windham's *Diary*, where such an argument was enforced on Dec. 7.

prince. He said that he had always been struck with the resemblance of the Jewish passover and the Christian doctrine of redemption<sup>1</sup>. He thanked us all for our attendance, and we left him with Mr. Langton.

Thursday, Dec. 9.—Called in the evening; did not see him, as he was engaged.

Friday, Dec. 10.—Called about eleven in the morning; saw Mr. La Trobe there<sup>2</sup>: neither of us saw the Doctor, as we understood he wished not to be visited that day. In the evening I sent him a letter, recommending Dr. Dalloway (an irregular physician<sup>3</sup>) as an extraordinary person for curing the dropsy. He returned me a verbal answer that he was obliged to me, but that it was too late. My son read prayers with him this day.

Saturday, Dec. 11.—Went to Bolt Court about twelve; met there Dr. Burney, Dr. Taylor, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Sastres, Mr. Paradise<sup>4</sup>, Count Zenobia, and Mr. Langton. Mrs. Hoole called for me there: we both went to him; he received us very kindly; told me he had my letter, but 'it was too late for doctors, *regular* or *irregular*.' His physicians had been with him that day, but prescribed nothing. Mr. Cruikshanks came; the Doctor was rather cheerful with him; he said, 'Come, give me your hand,' and shook him by the hand, adding, 'You shall make no other use of it now;' meaning he should not examine his legs. Mr. Cruikshanks wished to do it, but the Doctor would not let him. Mr. Cruikshanks said he would call in the evening.

Sunday, Dec. 12.—Was not at Bolt Court in the forenoon; at St. Sepulchre's school<sup>5</sup> in the evening with Mrs. Hoole, where we saw Mrs. Gardiner and Lady Rothes<sup>6</sup>; heard that Dr. Johnson was very bad, and had been something delirious. Went to Bolt Court about nine, and found there Mr. Windham and the Rev. Mr. Strahan. The Doctor was then very bad in bed, which

<sup>1</sup> See post in Mr. Windham's *Diary*. die by the College.' *Ib.* ii. 354, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> A Moravian. *Life*, iv. 410.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson was not the man to admit 'an irregular physician'—in other words, a quack. With George III he would have said, 'I shall

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 105, n.

<sup>5</sup> The Ladies' Charity School, to which Johnson was a subscriber. *Letters*, i. 156.

<sup>6</sup> Bennet Langton's wife. *Life*, ii. 146.

I think

I think he had only taken to that day: he had now refused to take any more medicine or food. Mr. Cruikshanks came about eleven: he endeavoured to persuade him to take some nourishment, but in vain. Mr. Windham then went again to him, and, by the advice of Mr. Cruikshanks, put it upon this footing—that by persisting to refuse all sustenance he might probably defeat his own purpose *to preserve his mind clear*, as his weakness might bring on paralytic complaints that might affect his mental powers<sup>1</sup>. The Doctor, Mr. Windham said, heard him patiently; but when he had heard all, he desired to be troubled no more. He then took a most affectionate leave of Mr. Windham<sup>2</sup>, who reported to us the issue of the conversation, for only Mr. De Moulins was with them in the chamber. I did not see the Doctor that day, being fearful of disturbing him, and never conversed with him again. I came away about half-past eleven with Mr. Windham.

Monday, Dec. 13.—Went to Bolt Court at eleven o'clock in the morning; met a young lady coming down stairs from the Doctor, whom, upon inquiry, I found to be Miss Morris (a sister to Miss Morris, formerly on the stage<sup>3</sup>). Mrs. De Moulins told me that she had seen the Doctor; that by her desire he had been told she came to ask his blessing, and that he said, 'God bless you!' I then went up into his chamber, and found him lying very composed in a kind of doze: he spoke to nobody. Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Langton, Mrs. Gardiner, Rev. Mr. Strahan and Mrs. Strahan, Doctors Brocklesby and Butter, Mr. Steevens, and Mr. Nichols the printer, came; but no one chose to disturb him by speaking to him, and he seemed to take no notice of any person. While Mrs. Gardiner and I were there, before the rest came, he took a little warm milk in a cup, when he said something upon its not being properly given into his hand: he breathed very regular, though short, and appeared to be mostly in a calm sleep or dozing. I left him in this state, and never more saw him alive. In the evening I supped with Mrs. Hoole and my

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 415; *ante*, ii. 128.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 415, *n.* 1.

<sup>3</sup> 'She appeared in Juliet at Covent Garden, Nov. 26, 1768, and died

May 1, 1769.' HOOLE. Her likeness as Hope nursing Love was painted by Reynolds. Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 185.



son at Mr. Braithwaite's<sup>1</sup>, and at night my servant brought me word that my dearest friend died that evening about seven o'clock: and next morning I went to the house, where I met Mr. Seward<sup>2</sup>; we went together into the chamber, and there saw the most awful sight of Dr. Johnson laid out in his bed, without life!

<sup>1</sup> 'That amiable and friendly man, who, with modest and unassuming manners, has associated with many

of the wits of the age.' *Life*, iv. 278.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 123.

## ANECDOTES OF JOHNSON

PUBLISHED BY G. KEARSLEY<sup>1</sup>

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MR. JOHNSON was not unacquainted with Savage's frailties; but, as he has not long since said to a friend on this subject, 'he knew his heart, and that was never intentionally abandoned; for though he generally mistook the *love* for the *practice* of virtue, he was at all times a true and sincere believer<sup>2</sup>.'

Savage living very intimately with most of the wits of what is called our Augustan age, gave Mr. Johnson many anecdotes, with which he has since enriched his Biographical Prefaces<sup>3</sup>. The following, however, I believe, has never appeared in print before.

Sir Richard Steele<sup>4</sup>, Phillips<sup>5</sup>, and Savage, spending the night together, at a tavern, in Gerard-street<sup>6</sup>, Soho, they sallied out in the morning—all very much intoxicated with liquor—when they were accosted by a tradesman, going to his work, at the top of

<sup>1</sup> This Life is said to be by William Cooke, known as 'Conversation Cooke.' Nichols, *Lit. Hist.* vii. 467. He derived his name from his poem *On Conversation. Ib.* He was a member of the Essex Head Club. *Life*, iv. 437.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson in his *Life of Savage* says that 'in cases indifferent [where friends or enemies were not concerned] he was zealous for virtue, truth and justice; he knew very well the necessity of goodness to the present and future happiness

of mankind.' *Works*, viii. 190.

For principles and practice see *Life*, i. 418; ii. 341; v. 210, 359.

'No man's religion ever survives his morals.' South's *Sermons*, ed. 1823, i. 291.

<sup>3</sup> *The Lives of the Poets. Life*, iv. 35, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> For anecdotes of Steele and the bailiffs see *Works*, viii. 104.

<sup>5</sup> No doubt Ambrose Philips, who knew Steele. *Works*, viii. 388.

<sup>6</sup> At the Turk's Head in this street the Literary Club met at first.

Hedge-lane<sup>1</sup>; who, after begging their pardon for the liberty of addressing them on the subject, told them—‘that, at the bottom of the lane, he saw two or three suspicious-looking fellows, who appeared to be bailiffs,—so that, if any of them were apprehensive of danger, he had better take a different route.’—Not one of them waited to thank the man, but flew off, different ways, each conscious, from the embarrassments of his own affairs, that such a circumstance was very likely to happen to himself. (Page 27.)

Johnson, soon after the publication of his English Dictionary, made a proposal to a number of Booksellers convened for that purpose, of writing a *Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*<sup>2</sup>. This proposal went round the room without any answer, when a well-known son of the trade<sup>3</sup> since dead, remarkable for the abruptness of his manners, replied, ‘Why, Doctor, what the D—I do you know of trade and commerce?’ The Doctor very modestly answered, ‘Why, Sir, not much I confess in the *practical* line—but I believe I could glean, from different authors of authority on the subject, such materials as would answer the purpose very well<sup>5</sup>.’ (Page 34.)

When Cave got into affluence, it was usual with him, upon the

<sup>1</sup> Hedge Lane was near Charing Cross. Dodsley’s *London*, iii. 178. For Johnson’s visit to a poor man there see *Life*, iii. 324.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson contributed the preface to Rolt’s *Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*. *Life*, i. 358. See also *ante*, i. 412.

<sup>3</sup> ‘As Physicians are called *the Faculty* and Counsellors at Law *the Profession*, the Booksellers of London are denominated *the Trade*. Johnson disapproved of these denominations.’ *Life*, iii. 285.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson did not receive a doctor’s degree till many years later; neither is it likely that he would have left the form of the question unrebuked.

<sup>5</sup> When Boswell told Johnson of Sir John Pringle’s observation ‘that

Dr. Smith, who had never been in trade, could not expect to write well on that subject any more than a lawyer upon physick,’ he replied:—‘He is mistaken, Sir: a man who has never been engaged in trade himself may undoubtedly write well upon trade, and there is nothing which requires more to be illustrated by philosophy than trade does.’ *Life*, ii. 430.

Of those ‘in the practical line’ Smith had a low opinion. ‘People of the same trade,’ he writes, ‘seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices.’ *Wealth of Nations*, ed. 1811, i. 177. See also *ib.* i. 352.

receipt

receipt of any large sum of money, to make his wife the cash-keeper. The frequency of this, and the dependence which he had on her management of it, tempted her to practice 'the little pilfering temper of a wife;' she therefore from time to time accumulated a considerable sum, which Cave knew nothing of. Her last illness was an asthma; and though she every day grew worse, she reserved this secret from her husband till her breath grew so short, that she had only time to tell him 'she had secreted a part of the money which he occasionally gave her, which she laid out in India bonds.' She was immediately after taken in convulsions, and died before she had time to say where they were hid, or in whose possession they were deposited. Cave on her death made every possible enquiry after his property, but such *is the integrity of some friendships*, the bonds were never afterwards found<sup>1</sup>. (Page 47.)

At Lichfield he used sometimes to recall the memory of past times, and enter into all the boyish sports and gambols of his youth, and it is but a very few years back, that he obliged the master of the school where he had been educated, to restore to the boys, an annual entertainment of *Furmenti*<sup>2</sup>, which had been practised in his days, but had for some time been discontinued. (Page 66.)

On the Sunday night preceding his death, he was obliged to be turned in the bed by two strong men employed for that purpose. He was at intervals likewise delirious; and in one of those fits, seeing a friend at the bed-side, he exclaimed, 'What,

<sup>1</sup> For this anecdote see *Life*, iv. 319, where the wife's name is not mentioned:—'Her husband said, he was more hurt by her want of confidence in him, than by the loss of his money. "I told him," said Johnson, "that he should console himself; for *perhaps* the money might be *found*, and he was *sure* that his wife was *gone*."'

Johnson in his *Life of Cave* says:—'Cave seemed not at first much

affected by her death, but in a few days lost his sleep and his appetite, which he never recovered.' *Works*, vi. 433.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson defines *furmenty* as *food made by boiling wheat in milk*. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, p. 578; 1785, p. 96, it is stated that *furmenty* or *frumity* is eaten in many places on Mothering Sunday (Mid-Lent-Sunday) and on Christmas Eve.

will that fellow never have done talking poetry to me ' ? ' He recovered his senses before morning, but spoke little after this. His heart, however, was not unemployed, as by his fixed attention, and the motion of his lips, it was evident he was pouring out his soul in prayer. (Page 79.)

Dr. Johnson's face was composed of large coarse features, which, from a studious turn, when composed, looked sluggish, yet awful and contemplative. The head at the front of this book is esteemed a good likeness; indeed so much, that when the Doctor saw the drawing, he exclaimed, ' Well, thou art an ugly fellow, but still, I believe thou art like the original ' . The Doctor sat for this picture to Mr. Trotter <sup>3</sup>, in February 1782, at the request of Mr. Kearsley, who had just furnished him with a complete list of all his works, for he confessed he had forgot more than half what he had written <sup>4</sup>.

His face, however, was capable of great expression, both in respect to intelligence and mildness, as all those can witness who have seen him in the flow of conversation, or under the influence of grateful feelings. I am the more confirmed in this opinion, by the authority of a celebrated French Physiognomist, who has, in a late publication on his art <sup>5</sup>, given two different etchings of Dr. Johnson's head, to shew the correspondence between the countenance and the mind.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he was haunted by the thought of the writer of whom he said: ' I never did the man an injury; but he would persist in reading his tragedy to me.' *Life*, iv. 244, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Mme. D'Arblay records that Johnson saw her examining ' a small engraving of his portrait from the picture of Reynolds. He began seeing for a moment or two in silence, and then, with a ludicrous half laugh, peeping over her shoulder, he called out:—' Ah ha!—Sam Johnson!—I see thee!—and an ugly dog thou art!' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 180.

' Hayter,' wrote Macaulay, ' has painted me for his picture of the House of Commons. I cannot judge of his performance. I can only say, as Charles the Second did on a similar occasion, " Odds fish, if I am like this, I am an ugly fellow." ' Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ed. 1877, ii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Trotter had worked with Blake. Gilchrist's *Blake*, i. 33, 57. This picture is, I believe, the one in the Library of Pembroke College.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 112; iii. 321.

<sup>5</sup> Lavater's *Essay on Physiognomy*. *Life*, iv. 422. In the English translation, published in 1789, a third etching is given, i. 194.

In respect to person, he was rather of the heroic stature, being above the middle size; but though strong, broad, and muscular, his parts were slovenly put together. When he walked the streets, what with the constant roll of his head, and the concomitant motion of his body, he appeared to make his way by that motion, independent of his feet<sup>1</sup>. (Page 87.)

Amongst the poets of his own country, next to Shakespeare, he admired Milton<sup>2</sup>; and though in some parts of the life of this great man, he has been rather severe on his political character, there are others where he bestows the highest praises on his learning and genius. To this I am happy to add another eulogium, which I heard from him in conversation a few months before his death:—'Milton (says he) had that which rarely fell to the lot of any man—an unbounded imagination, with a store of knowledge equal to all its calls<sup>3</sup>.' (Page 99.)

In his conversation he was learned, various, and instructive, oftener in the didactic than in the colloquial line, which might have arisen from the encouragement of his friends, who generally flattered him with the most profound attention—and surely it was well bestowed; for in those moments, the great variety of his reading broke in upon his mind, like mountain floods, which

<sup>1</sup> Boswell quoting this description says:—'His peculiar march is described in a very just and picturesque manner.' *Life*, iv. 71.

<sup>2</sup> For Johnson's estimate of Shakespeare see *Life*, ii. 86, *n.* 1, and of Milton, *ib.* i. 230; iv. 40; *ante*, i. 216.

<sup>3</sup> 'The thoughts which are occasionally called forth in the progress [of *Paradise Lost*] are such as could only be produced by an imagination in the highest degree fervid and active, to which materials were supplied by incessant study and unlimited curiosity. . . . Milton had considered creation in its whole extent, and his descriptions are

therefore learned.' *Works*, vii. 130.

Edward FitzGerald wrote to Professor C. E. Norton on Jan. 23, 1876:—'I don't think I've read Milton these forty years; the whole scheme of the poem, and certain parts of it, looming as grand as anything in my memory; but I never could read ten lines together without stumbling at some pedantry that tipped me at once out of Paradise, or even Hell, into the schoolroom, worse than either. . . . Tennyson certainly then thought Milton the sublimest of all the gang; his diction modelled on Virgil, as perhaps Dante's.' *Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, 1894. ii. 193.

he

he poured out upon his audience in all the fullness of information—not but he observed Swift's rule, 'of giving every man time to take his share in the conversation';<sup>1</sup> and when the company thought proper to engage him in the general discussion of little matters, no man threw back the ball with greater ease and pleasantry.

He always expressed himself with clearness and precision, and seldom made use of an unnecessary word—each had its due weight, and stood in its proper place. He was sometimes a little too tenacious of his own opinion, particularly when it was in danger of being wrested from him by any of the company. Here he used to collect himself with all his strength—and here he shewed such skill and dexterity in defence, that he either tired out his adversary, or turned the laugh against him, by the power of his wit and irony<sup>2</sup>.

In this place, it would be omitting a very singular quality of his, not to speak of the amazing powers of his memory<sup>3</sup>. The great stores of learning which he laid in, in his youth, were not of that cumbrous and inactive quality, which we meet with in many who are called great scholars; for he could, at all times, draw bills upon this capital with the greatest security of being paid. When quotations were made against him in conversation, either by applying to the context, he gave a different turn to the passage, or quoted from other parts of the same author, that which was more favourable to his own opinion:—if these failed him, he would instantly call up a whole phalanx of other authorities, by which he bore down his antagonist with all the superiority of allied force.

But it is not the readiness with which he applied to different authors, proves so much the greatness of his memory, as the extent to which he could carry his recollection upon occasions. I remember one day, in a conversation upon the miseries of old age, a gentleman in company observed, he always thought Juvenal's description of them to be rather too highly coloured—

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Swift did not claim the right of talking alone; for it was his rule, when he had spoken a minute, to

give room by a pause for any other speaker.' *Works*, viii. 225.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 100.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* v. 368; *ante*, ii. 85, 87.

upon which the Doctor replied—‘No, Sir—I believe not; they may not all belong to an individual, but they are collectively true of old age’.<sup>1</sup> Then rolling about his head, as if snuffing up his recollection, he suddenly broke out:—

‘Ille humero, hic lumbis,’ &c. . . .

down to ‘et nigra veste senescant.’

(Satire x. 227-245.)

Some time previous to Dr. Hawkesworth’s publication of his beautiful *Ode on Life*<sup>2</sup>, he carried it down with him to a friend’s house in the country to retouch. Dr. Johnson was of this party; and as Hawkesworth and the Doctor lived upon the most intimate terms<sup>3</sup>, the former read it to him for his opinion. ‘Why, Sir,’ says Johnson, ‘I can’t well determine on a first hearing, read it again, second thoughts are best’; Dr. Hawkesworth complied, after which Dr. Johnson read it himself, approved of it very highly, and returned it.

Next morning at breakfast, the subject of the poem being renewed, Dr. Johnson, after again expressing his approbation of it, said he had but one objection to make to it, which was, that he doubted its originality. Hawkesworth, alarmed at this, challenged him to the proof; when the Doctor repeated the whole of the poem, with only the omission of a very few lines; ‘What do you say now, Hawkey?’ says the Doctor. ‘Only this,’ replied the other, ‘that I shall never repeat any thing I write before you again, for you have a memory that would convict any author of plagiarism in any court of literature in the world.’

I have now the poem before me, and I find it contains no less than *sixty-eight* lines. (Page 100.)

His life reflected the purity and integrity of his writings. His friendships, as they were generally formed on the broad basis of virtue, were constant, active, and unshaken. And what rendered

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 1747, p. 337.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson at the beginning of

the *Life of Swift*, speaking of Hawkesworth, mentions ‘the intimacy of our friendship.’ See *ante*, i. 166.

them



them still more valuable, he knew and practised that sort which was most applicable to the wants of his friends. To those in need he liberally opened his purse—To others he gave up his time, his interest, and his advice<sup>1</sup>; and having an honest confidence that this last was of some weight in the world, he scarcely let a proper opportunity slip without enforcing it; particularly to young men, whom [*sic*] he hoped would remember what fell from such high authority; even to children he could be playfully instructive. (Page 112.)

Some years since the Doctor coming up Fleet-street, at about two o'clock in the morning, he was alarmed with the cries of a person seemingly in great distress. He followed the voice for some time, when, by the glimmer of an expiring lamp, he perceived an unhappy female, almost naked, and perishing on a truss of straw, who had just strength enough to tell him, 'she was turned out by an inhuman landlord in that condition, and to beg his charitable assistance not to let her die in the street.' The Doctor melted at her story, desired her to place her confidence in God, for that under him he would be her protector. He accordingly looked about for a coach to put her into; but there was none to be had: 'his charity, however, worked too strong,' to be cooled by such an accident. He kneeled down by her side, raised her in his arms, wrapped his great coat about her, placed her on his back, and in this condition carried her home to his house.

Next day her disorder appearing to be venereal, he was advised to abandon her; but he replied, 'that may be as much her misfortune as her fault; I am determined to give her the chance of a reformation'; he accordingly kept her in his house above thirteen weeks, where she was regularly attended by a physician, who recovered her.

The Doctor, during this time, learned more of her story; and finding her to be one of those unhappy women who are impelled to this miserable life more from necessity than inclination, he set

<sup>1</sup> To Mr. Thrale he wrote:—'The advice that is wanted is commonly unwanted is evidently impertinent.' *Letters*, ii. 162. For the assistance he gave see *ante*, i. 180, 236, 279.

on foot a subscription, and established her in a milliner's shop in the country, where she was living some years ago in very considerable repute<sup>1</sup>. (Page 24.)

His last advice to his friends was upon this subject [the religious duties], and, like a second Socrates, though under the sentence of death, from his infirmities, their eternal welfare was his principal theme—To some he enjoined it with tears in his eyes, reminding them, 'it was the dying request of a friend, who had no other way of paying the large obligations he owed them—but by this advice<sup>2</sup>.' (Page 118.)

[The five following anecdotes, attributed to Kearsley by Croker (vol. x. p. 99), are not in my edition of the *Life of Johnson* published by him.]

The emigration of the Scotch to London being a conversation between the Doctor and Foote, the latter said he believed the number of Scotch in London were as great in the former as the present reign. 'No, Sir!' said the Doctor, 'you are certainly wrong in your belief: but I see how you're deceived; you can't distinguish them now as formerly, for the fellows all come here *breeched* of late years<sup>3</sup>.'

'Pray, Doctor,' said a gentleman to him, 'is Mr. Thrale a man of conversation, or is he only wise and silent?' 'Why, Sir, his conversation does not show the minute hand; but he strikes the hour very correctly<sup>4</sup>.'

On Johnson's return from Scotland, a particular friend of his was saying, that now he had had a view of the country, he was in hopes it would cure him of many prejudices against that

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 321.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 146, 151.

<sup>3</sup> After the Rebellion of 1745 to wear the Highland dress was forbidden by law. Any one wearing it, 'not being a landed man, or the son of a landed man,' was, on conviction, 'to be delivered over to serve as a soldier.' The loyal Highlanders

in the Duke of Cumberland's army had been compelled in part to adopt the southern garb. When they passed in review before him he said:—'They look very well; have breeches, and are the better for that.' *Footsteps of Dr. Johnson in Scotland*, p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 423; *Life*, i. 494.

nation, particularly in respect to the fruits. 'Why, yes, Sir,' said the Doctor; 'I have found out that gooseberries will grow there against a south wall; but the skins are so tough, that it is death to the man who swallows one of them <sup>1</sup>.'

Being asked his opinion of hunting, he said, 'It was the labour of the savages of North America, but the amusement of the gentlemen of England <sup>2</sup>.'

When Johnson was told of Mrs. Thrale's marriage with Piozzi, the Italian singer, he was dumb with surprise for some moments; at last, recovering himself, he exclaimed with great emotion, 'Varium et mutabile semper fœmina <sup>3</sup>!'

<sup>1</sup> 'Things which grow wild here must be cultivated with great care in Scotland. Pray, now, (throwing himself back in his chair, and laughing) are you ever able to bring the sloe to perfection?' *Life*, ii. 77.  
<sup>2</sup> For his fox-hunting see *ante*, i. 287.  
<sup>3</sup> *Aeneid*, iv. 569.

## ANECDOTES AND REMARKS BY LADY KNIGHT<sup>1</sup>

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MRS. WILLIAMS was a person extremely interesting. She had uncommon firmness of mind, a boundless curiosity<sup>2</sup>, retentive memory, and strong judgment. She had various powers of pleasing. Her personal afflictions and slender fortune she seemed to forget, when she had the power of doing an act of kindness: she was social, cheerful, and active, in a state of body that was truly deplorable. Her regard to Dr. Johnson was formed with such strength of judgment and firm esteem, that her voice never hesitated when she repeated his maxims, or recited his good deeds; though upon many other occasions her want of sight led her to make so much use of her ear, as to affect her speech. Mrs. Williams was blind before she was acquainted with Dr. Johnson<sup>3</sup>. She had many resources, though none very great. With the Miss Wilkinsons she generally passed a part of the year, and received from them presents, and

<sup>1</sup> Published by Croker (vols. i. 275; iii. 9; x. 48) 'from a paper transmitted by Lady Knight to Rome to Mr. Hoole,' and printed in the *European Magazine*, October, 1799.

Lady Knight was the widow of Admiral Sir Charles Knight and mother of Cornelia Knight, who had the audacity to write a continuation of *Rasselas*, under the name of *Dinarbas*. The two stories were sometimes printed in one volume.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson wrote on her death:— 'Her acquisitions were many and her curiosity universal; so that she partook of every conversation.' *Life*,

iv. 239. 'Had she had good humour and prompt elocution, her universal curiosity and comprehensive knowledge would have made her the delight of all that knew her.' *Letters*, ii. 334. 'Her curiosity was universal, her knowledge was very extensive, and she sustained forty years of misery with steady fortitude.' *Ib.* p. 336.

<sup>3</sup> According to Boswell, she made his acquaintance when she came to London 'in hopes of being cured of a cataract in both her eyes, which afterwards ended in total blindness.' *Life*, i. 232.

from

from the first who died, a legacy of clothes and money. The last of them, Mrs. Jane, left her an annual rent; but from the blundering manner of the will, I fear she never reaped the benefit of it. The lady left money to erect a hospital for ancient maids; but the number she had allotted being too great for the donation, the Doctor [Johnson] said, it would better to expunge the word *maintain*, and put in to *starve* such a number of old maids. They asked him what name should be given it: he replied, 'Let it be called JENNY'S WHIM<sup>1</sup>.' Lady Philips<sup>2</sup> made her a small annual allowance, and some other Welsh ladies, to all of whom she was related. Mrs. Montagu, on the death of Mr. Montagu, settled upon her (by deed) ten pounds per annum<sup>3</sup>. As near as I can calculate, Mrs. Williams had about thirty-five or forty pounds a year. The furniture she used [in her apartment in Dr. Johnson's house] was her own<sup>4</sup>; her expenses were small, tea and bread and butter being at least half of her nourishment. Sometimes she had a servant or charwoman to do the ruder offices of the house<sup>5</sup>; but she was herself active and industrious. I have frequently seen her at work. Upon remarking one day her facility in moving about the house, searching into drawers, and finding books, without the help of sight, 'Believe me (said she), persons who cannot do these common offices without sight, did but little while they enjoyed that blessing.' Scanty circumstances, bad health, and blindness, are surely a sufficient apology for her being sometimes impatient: her natural disposition was good, friendly, and humane.

As to her poems, she many years attempted to publish them: the half-crowns she had got towards the publication, she confessed to me, went for necessities, and that the greatest

<sup>1</sup> 'Here [at Vauxhall] we picked up Lord Granby, arrived very drunk from Jenny's Whim.' Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 212. Jenny's Whim was a tavern at the end of the wooden bridge at Chelsea, where Victoria Station now stands. Wheatley's *London*, 1891, ii. 305.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Philipps of Picton Castle.

*Life*, v. 276.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, i. 371, n. 1; ii. 190.

<sup>4</sup> 'She left her little' to the Ladies' Charity School. *Ib.* ii. 334.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson had his man-servant, and a female-servant, to whom he bequeathed £100 stock. *Life*, iv. 402, n. 2.

pain she ever felt was from the appearance of defrauding her subscribers<sup>1</sup>: 'but what can I do? the Doctor [Johnson] always puts me off with "Well, we'll think about it;" and Goldsmith says, "Leave it to me".' However, two of her friends under her directions, made a new subscription at a crown, the whole price of the work, and in a very little time raised sixty pounds. Mrs. Carter was applied to by Mrs. Williams's desire, and she, with the utmost activity and kindness, procured a long list of names. At length the work was published, in which is a fine written but gloomy tale of Dr. Johnson<sup>3</sup>. The money (150*l.*) Mrs. Williams had various uses for, and a part of it was funded<sup>4</sup>.

Mrs. Williams's account of Johnson's wife was, that she had a good understanding and great sensibility, but inclined to be satirical. Her first husband died insolvent<sup>5</sup>; her sons were much disgusted with her for her second marriage; perhaps because they, being struggling to get advanced in life, were mortified to think she had allied herself to a man who had not any visible means of being useful to them. However, she always retained her affection for them. While they resided in Gough Court<sup>6</sup>, her son, the officer<sup>7</sup>, knocked at the door, and asked the maid if her mistress was at home? She answered,

<sup>1</sup> In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1750, p. 432, proposals were issued for printing her *Essays in Verse and Prose* by subscription. The price was to be five shillings, of which half was to be paid on subscribing. In 1759 Johnson was signing 'receipts with her name for subscribers.' *Letters*, i. 87. The book was not published till 1766. *Life*, ii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> In 1763 Goldsmith 'went with Johnson, strutting away,' from the Mitre, and calling out to Boswell, 'I go to Miss Williams.' *Life*, i. 421.

<sup>3</sup> *The Fountains*. *Ib.* ii. 26.

<sup>4</sup> In 1756 Garrick, at Johnson's desire, gave her a benefit-night at

his theatre, by which she got £200. *Ib.* i. 393, *n.* 1; *Letters*, i. 53.

Miss Hawkins, with a foolish insolence unrivalled even by her father's, writes (*Memoirs*, i. 152):—'Miss Williams being a gentlewoman, conferred on her protector the character of gentleman.' See *ante*, ii. 141, for Miss Hawkins's description of her dress.

<sup>5</sup> If he died insolvent 'her settlement was secured.' *Life*, i. 95, *n.* 3.

<sup>6</sup> Gough Square.

<sup>7</sup> A captain in the navy, who left his sister a fortune of £10,000. *Life*, ii. 462. His name was Jarvis (*ib.* i. 94), given him, no doubt, after his mother's family.

'Yes,

'Yes, Sir, but she is sick in bed.' 'O!' says he, 'if it is so, tell her that her son Jervas [*sic*] called to know how she did;' and was going away. The maid begged she might run up to tell her mistress, and, without attending his answer, left him. Mrs. Johnson, enraptured to hear her son was below, desired the maid to tell him she longed to embrace him. When the maid descended, the gentleman was gone, and poor Mrs. Johnson was much agitated by the adventure: it was the only time he ever made an effort to see her. Dr. Johnson did all he could to console his wife; but told Mrs. Williams, 'Her son is uniformly undutiful; so I conclude, like many other sober men, he might once in his life be drunk, and in that fit nature got the better of his pride.'

Mrs. Williams was never otherwise dependent on Dr. Johnson, than in that sort of association, which is little known in the great world. They both had much to struggle through; and I verily believe, that whichever held the purse, the other partook what want required<sup>1</sup>. She was, in respect to morals, more rigid than modern politeness admits; for she abhorred vice, and was not sparing of anger against those who threw young folks into temptation. Her ideas were very just in respect to the improvement of the mind, and her own was well stored. I have several of her letters: they are all written with great good sense and simplicity, and with a tenderness and affection, that far excel all that is called politeness and elegance. I have been favoured with her company some weeks at different times, and always found her temper equal<sup>2</sup>, and her conversation lively. I never passed hours with more pleasure than when I heard her and Dr. Johnson talk of the persons they valued, or upon subjects in which they were much interested. One night I remember Mrs. Williams was giving an account of the Wilkinsons being at Paris, and having had consigned to their care

<sup>1</sup> Except during the six years in which he was living in chambers (1759-65) he gave her an apartment (probably two rooms) in his own house from 1752 till her death in 1783. It is most unlikely that he

ever drew on her purse. For the last twenty-one years he was never in need, and at the time of his poverty they were not living in the same house.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 141.

the letters of Lady Wortley Montagu, on which they had bestowed great praise. The Doctor said, 'Why, Madam, there might be great charms to them in being intrusted with honourable letters; but those who know better of the world, would have rather possessed two pages of true history<sup>1</sup>.' One day that he came to my house to meet many others, we told him that we had arranged our party to go to Westminster Abbey, would not he go with us? 'No,' he replied; 'not while I can keep out<sup>2</sup>.' Upon our saying, that the friends of a lady had been in great fear lest she should make a certain match for herself, he said, 'We that are *his* friends have had great fears for him.' I talked to Mrs. Thrale much of dear Mrs. Williams. She said she was highly born; that she was very nearly related to a Welsh peer; but that, though Dr. Johnson had always pressed her to be acquainted with her, yet she could not; she was afraid of her<sup>3</sup>. I named her virtues; she seemed to hear me as if I had spoken of a newly discovered country<sup>4</sup>.

I think the character of Dr. Johnson can never be better summed up than in his own words in *Rasselas*, chapter xlii<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Horace Walpole wrote to Lady Craven on Jan. 2, 1787 (*Letters*, ix. 87):—'I am sorry to hear, Madam, that by your account Lady Mary Wortley was not so accurate and faithful as modern travellers. . . . As you rival her in poetic talents, I had rather you would employ them to celebrate her for her nostrum [inoculation] than detect her for romancing.'

<sup>2</sup> For his visit to the Abbey with Goldsmith see *Life*, ii. 238, and for the satisfaction he felt on being told that he would be buried there see *ib.* iv. 419.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale from Lichfield in 1775:—'Mrs. Williams wrote me word that you had honoured her with a visit, and behaved lovely.' *Letters*, i. 360.

<sup>4</sup> In spite of all the evidence of her 'valuable qualities,' and of 'the blank that her departure left in John-

son's house' (*Life*, iv. 235, 239), Macaulay includes her in the 'crowd of wretched old creatures who could find no other asylum' than his house; whose 'peevishness and ingratitude could not weary out his benevolence.' *Essays*, ed. 1843, i. 390.

It was not till 1778 that discord was caused by his taking in three more poor women. *Life*, iii. 222. Towards the end of Miss Williams' life her illness increased her peevishness. *ib.* iii. 128.

<sup>5</sup> It is doubtless to chapter xl that she refers, where the astronomer is thus described:—'His comprehension is vast, his memory capacious and retentive, his discourse is methodical, and his expression clear. His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepest researches and most favourite studies



He was master of an infinite deal of wit, which proceeded from depth of thought, and of a humour which he used sometimes to take off from the asperity of reproof. Though he did frequently utter very sportive things, which might be said to be playing upon the folly of some of his companions, and though he never said one that could disgrace him, yet I think, now that he is no more, the care should be to prove his steady uniformity in wisdom, virtue, and religion. His political principles ran high, both in church and state: he wished power to the king and to the heads of the church, as the laws of England have established; but I know he disliked absolute power<sup>1</sup>, and I am very sure of his disapprobation of the doctrines of the church of Rome; because, about three weeks before we came abroad, he said to my Cornelia, 'You are going where the ostentatious pomp of church ceremonies attracts the imagination; but, if they want to persuade you to change your religion, you must remember, that, by increasing your faith, you may be persuaded to become a Turk<sup>2</sup>.' If these were not the words, I have kept up to the express meaning.

are willingly interrupted for any opportunity of doing good by his counsel or his riches. To his closest retreat, in his most busy moments, all are admitted that want his assistance:—"For though I exclude idleness and pleasure, I will never," says he, "bar my doors against charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded." Johnson was also likened to Imlac, the man of learning. *Life*, ii. 119, n. 1; iii. 6. He describes himself also in chapter xlv.

<sup>1</sup> 'When I say that all governments are alike, I consider that in no government power can be abused long. Mankind will not bear it. If a sovereign oppresses his people to a great degree, they will rise and cut off his head. There is a remedy in human nature against tyranny, that will keep us safe under every form of government.' *Life*, ii. 170.

<sup>2</sup> See *Letters*, i. 147, for the advice he gave to F. A. Barnard, the King's Librarian, when he was going to Italy, and *ante*, i. 210.

## ANECDOTES BY HANNAH MORE<sup>1</sup>

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[‘HANNAH MORE visited London in 1773 or 1774, in company with two of her sisters; her introduction to Mr. and Mrs. Garrick took place in about a week after her arrival. It was afterwards his delight to introduce his new friend to the best and most gifted society.’ *Memoirs*, i. 47.]

In her childhood she had been wont ‘to make a carriage of a chair, and then to call her sisters to ride with her to London to see bishops and booksellers.’ *Ib.* i. 14.

She was born in 1745 ten months before the Young Pretender invaded England, and died in 1833, the year after the great Reform Bill was passed.

‘Her nurse, a pious old woman, had lived in the family of Dryden, whose son she had attended in his last illness, and the inquisitive mind of the little Hannah was continually prompting her to ask for stories about the poet Dryden.’ *Ib.* i. 11. It must have been Dryden’s third son, Erasmus Henry, whom the old woman nursed. He died in 1710, nine years after his father. Scott’s *Life of Dryden*, ed. 1834, p. 396.

When Macaulay was six years old Hannah More wrote to him:—‘Though you are a little boy now, you will one day, if it please God, be a man; but long before you are a man I hope you will be a scholar. I therefore wish you to purchase such books as will be useful and agreeable to you *then*, and that you employ this very small sum in laying a little tiny cornerstone for your future library.’ A year or two afterwards she wrote:—‘You must go to Hatchard’s and choose another book. I think we have nearly exhausted the Epics. What say you

<sup>1</sup> From *Memoirs of the Life and More*, by William Roberts, Esq. *Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah* 4 vols. 1834.

to a little good prose? Johnson's Hebrides or Walton's Lives,' &c. Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ed. 1877, i. 35.

Macaulay wrote to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1837:—'Hannah More was exactly the very last person in the world about whom I should choose to write a critique. She was a very kind friend to me from childhood. Her notice first called out my literary tastes. Her presents laid the foundation of my library. She was to me what Ninon was to Voltaire,—begging her pardon for comparing her to a strumpet, and yours for comparing myself to a great man. She really was a second mother to me. I have a real affection for her memory. I, therefore, could not write about her, unless I wrote in her praise; and all the praise which I could give to her writings, even after straining my conscience in her favour, would be far indeed from satisfying any of her admirers. I will try my hand on Temple and on Lord Clive.' *Macvey Napier Corres.*, p. 192.

Macaulay's sister (afterwards Lady Trevelyan) was christened Hannah More. He wrote to her when he was reviewing Croker's *Boswell*:—'The lady whom Johnson abused for flattering him was certainly, according to Croker, Hannah More [*Life*, iii. 293]. Another ill-natured sentence about a Bath lady whom Johnson called "empty-headed" is also applied to your godmother.' Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ed. 1877, i. 231. For Croker's assertion that the Bath lady (*Life*, iii. 48) was Hannah More there was no foundation. Her *Memoirs* published three years later than his *Boswell* show that she was in London when this epithet was applied by Johnson to 'a lady then in Bath.' 'I find,' she wrote to her sister, 'that Mr. Boswell called upon you at Bristol with Dr. Johnson.' *Post*, p. 185, *n*.

Nearly fifty years after she first met Johnson, De Quincey described her conversation as 'brilliant and instructive.' De Quincey's *Works*, ed. 1872, xvi. 504.]

THE desire Hannah More had long felt to see Dr. Johnson, was speedily gratified. Her first introduction to him took place at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who prepared her, as he handed her upstairs, for the possibility of his being in one of his moods of sadness and silence.

She

She was surprised at his coming to meet her as she entered the room, with good humour in his countenance, and a macaw of Sir Joshua's in his hand<sup>1</sup>; and still more, at his accosting her with a verse from a Morning Hymn which she had written at the desire of Sir James Stonehouse<sup>2</sup>. In the same pleasant humour he continued the whole of the evening<sup>3</sup>. An extract from the letters of one of her sprightly sisters, to the family at home, will afford the best picture of the intercourse and scenes in which Hannah was now beginning to bear a part. *Memoirs*, i. 48.

London, 1774.

'We have paid another visit to Miss Reynolds. She had sent to engage Dr. Percy (Percy's collection<sup>4</sup>—now you know him,) quite a sprightly modern, instead of a rusty antique, as

<sup>1</sup> Sir Joshua, says Northcote, introduced this macaw into several of his pictures. One of the housemaids, whose portrait Northcote painted, was looked upon by the bird as his enemy. When he saw the likeness 'he quickly spread his wings, and in great fury ran to it, and stretched himself up to bite at the face.' He would do this whenever he saw the picture, and did it 'in the presence of Edmund Burke, Dr. Johnson, and Dr. Goldsmith.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 252.

<sup>2</sup> A physician of Northampton, who settled in Bristol and entered the church. *Memoirs of H. More*, i. 30. 'My counsellor, physician and divine,' she calls him; 'who first awakened me to some sense of religious things.' *Ib.* iii. 191.

<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, if we can trust Malone's story, it was on this evening that he administered to her a most severe rebuke. 'She very soon began to pay her court to him in the most fulsome strain. "Spare me, I beseech you, dear Madam," was his reply. She still *laid it on*. "Pray, Madam, let us have no more

of this," he rejoined. Not paying any attention to these warnings, she continued still her eulogy. At length, provoked by this indelicate and *vain* obtrusion of compliments, he exclaimed, "Dearest Lady, consider with yourself what your flattery is worth, before you bestow it so freely." *Life*, iv. 341; *ante*, i. 273.

That this rebuke was administered is beyond a doubt (see *Life*, iv. 341, n. 6); that it was administered this evening seems unlikely.

In 1780, describing an evening with him at Miss Reynold's, she says (*post*, p. 189):—'As usual, he laughed when I flattered him.' It was to Miss Reynolds that Johnson, two years earlier, said, 'I was obliged to speak, to let her [Miss More] know that I desired she would not flatter me so much.' *Life*, iii. 293.

Nearly forty years later, writing of Addison and Johnson, she said:—'I love and honour those two men in a very high degree, though the term *love* rather belongs to Addison, *honour* to Johnson.' *Memoirs*, iii. 340.

<sup>4</sup> She refers to the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.

I expected<sup>1</sup>. He was no sooner gone, than the most amiable and obliging of women (Miss Reynolds,) ordered the coach, to take us to Dr. Johnson's *very own house*; yes, Abyssinia's Johnson! Dictionary Johnson! Rambler's, Idler's, and Irene's Johnson! Can you picture to yourselves the palpitation of our hearts as we approached his mansion. The conversation turned upon a new work of his, just going to the press, (the *Tour to the Hebrides*<sup>2</sup>), and his old friend Richardson<sup>3</sup>. Mrs. Williams, the blind poet<sup>4</sup>, who lives with him, was introduced to us. She is engaging in her manners; her conversation lively and entertaining. Miss Reynolds told the doctor of all our rapturous exclamations on the road. He shook his scientific head at Hannah, and said, "She was a *silly thing*." When our visit was ended, he called for his hat, (as it rained) to attend us down a very long entry to our coach, and not Rasselas could have acquitted himself more *en cavalier*<sup>5</sup>. We are engaged with him at Sir Joshua's, Wednesday evening. What do you think of us?

I forgot to mention, that not finding Johnson in his little parlour when we came in, Hannah seated herself in his great chair, hoping to catch a little ray of his genius; when he heard it, he laughed heartily, and told her it was a chair on which he never sat<sup>6</sup>. He said it reminded him of Boswell and himself when they stopt a night at the spot (as they imagined) where the Weird Sisters appeared to Macbeth: the idea so worked upon their enthusiasm, that it quite deprived them of rest: however they learnt, the next morning, to their mortification,

<sup>1</sup> Miss Burney wrote of him seventeen years later:—'The Bishop is perfectly easy and unassuming, very communicative, and though not very entertaining because too prolix, he is otherwise intelligent and of good conversation.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, v. 256.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson wrote on June 21, 1774:—'Yesterday I put the first sheets of the *Journey to the Hebrides* to the press.' *Life*, ii. 278.

<sup>3</sup> The author of *Clarissa*—one of the very few men whom Johnson

'sought after.' *Ib.* iii. 314.

<sup>4</sup> She published in 1766 a volume of *Miscellanies*. Most of her poems were corrected by Johnson. *Ib.* ii. 25; *ante*, i. 403; ii. 172.

<sup>5</sup> He was living in Johnson's Court as late as May, 1775, but by March, 1776, had removed to Bolt Court. *Life*, ii. 375, 427. For his conducting Madame de Boufflers to her coach and 'showing himself a man of gallantry,' see *ib.* ii. 405, and *post*, p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, iv. 232, n. 1.

that

that they had been deceived, and were quite in another part of the country<sup>1</sup>.

Johnson afterwards mentioned to Miss Reynolds how much he had been touched with the enthusiasm which was visible in the whole manner of the young authoress, which was evidently genuine and unaffected. *Memoirs*, i. 49.

London, 1775.

I had yesterday the pleasure of dining in Hill Street, Berkeley Square, at a certain Mrs. Montagu's, a name not totally obscure<sup>2</sup>. The party consisted of herself, Mrs. Carter<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Johnson, Solander<sup>4</sup>, and Matty<sup>5</sup>, Mrs. Boscawen<sup>6</sup>, Miss Reynolds, and Sir Joshua, (the idol of every company;) some other persons of high rank and less wit, and your humble servant. . . .

Mrs. Montagu received me with the most encouraging kindness; she is not only the finest genius, but the finest lady I ever saw: she lives in the highest style of magnificence; her apartments

<sup>1</sup> There seems some mistake in her narrative. Boswell recorded in his *Journal*:—'In the afternoon we drove over the very heath where Macbeth met the witches according to tradition. . . . We got to Fores at night.' *Ib.* v. 115. Johnson says:—'We went forwards the same day to Fores, the town to which Macbeth was travelling when he met the weird sisters in his way. This to an Englishman is classick ground. Our imaginations were heated, and our thoughts recalled to their old amusements.' *Works*, ix. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Montagu was not yet in her new house in Portman Square, from which Johnson and Boswell were a few years later excluded on account of the offence given by the *Life of Lyttelton*. *Life*, iv. 64. H. More writes of it in 1783:—'To all the magnificence of a very superb London house is added the scenery of a country retirement.' *Memoirs*, i. 241. In 1784, after spending a

fortnight with Mrs. Montagu, she writes:—'One may say of her, what Johnson has said of somebody else, that "she never opens her mouth but to say something."'*Ib.* i. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Known as 'the learned Mrs. Carter.' *Life*, i. 122, n. 4.

<sup>4</sup> 'Her calm orderly mind,' wrote H. More (*Memoirs*, iii. 306), 'dreaded nothing so much as irregularity; she was therefore most strictly high church, and most scrupulously forbore reading any book, however sound or sober, which proceeded from any other quarter. She would on no account have read Doddridge or Pascal.'

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 280.

<sup>6</sup> Either Dr. Matthew Maty (*Life*, i. 284), or his son Paul Henry Maty (*ante*, i. 237).

<sup>6</sup> She wrote to Hannah More five years later:—'I have claims upon Dr. Johnson; but as he never knows me when he meets me, they are all stifled in the cradle.' H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 191. See also *Life*, iii. 331.

and

and table are in the most splendid taste; but what baubles are these when speaking of a Montagu! her form (for she has no *body*) is delicate even to fragility; her countenance the most animated in the world; the sprightly vivacity of fifteen, with the judgment and experience of a Nestor<sup>1</sup>. . . . Dr. Johnson asked me how I liked the new tragedy of Braganza<sup>2</sup>. I was afraid to speak before them all, as I knew a diversity of opinion prevailed among the company; however, as I thought it a less evil to dissent from the opinion of a fellow creature, than to tell a falsity, I ventured to give my sentiments; and was satisfied with Johnson's answering, 'You are right, madam.'

[From MISS SARAH MORE to one of her sisters.]

London, 1775.

Tuesday evening we drank tea at Sir Joshua's with Dr. Johnson. Hannah is certainly a great favourite. She was placed next him, and they had the entire conversation to themselves. They were both in remarkably high spirits; it was certainly her lucky night! I never heard her say so many good things. The old genius was extremely jocular, and the young one very pleasant. You would have imagined we had been at some comedy had you heard our peals of laughter. They, indeed, tried which could 'pepper the highest<sup>3</sup>,' and it is not clear to me that the lexicographer was really the highest seasoner. *Memoirs*, i. 52.

[MISS H. MORE to one of her sisters.]

London, 1776.

Just returned from spending one of the most agreeable days of my life, with the female Mæcenas of Hill Street; she engaged me five or six days ago to dine with her, and had assembled

<sup>1</sup> For 'her *trying* for this same air and manner,' see *Life*, iii. 244, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> By Robert Jephson. Horace Walpole wrote the Prologue. Walpole's *Letters*, i. Preface, p. 77. On Feb. 18 of this year he wrote:—'*Braganza* was acted last night with prodigious success . . . I went to the rehearsal with all the eagerness of eighteen, and was delighted to find

myself so young again.' *Ib.* vi. 190; *ante*, ii. 46.

<sup>3</sup> 'Till his relish grown callous,  
almost to disease,  
Who peppered the highest was  
surest to please.'

Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

It seems improbable that this 'peppering' could have followed Johnson's rebuke.

half the wits of the age. The only fault that charming woman has, is, that she is fond of collecting too many of them together at one time<sup>1</sup>. There were nineteen persons assembled at dinner, but after the repast, she has a method of dividing her guests, or rather letting them assort themselves into little groups of five or six each. I spent my time in going from one to the other of these little societies, as I happened more or less to like the subjects they were discussing. Mrs. Scott<sup>2</sup>, Mrs. Montagu's sister, a very good writer, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Barbauld<sup>3</sup>, and a man of letters, whose name I have forgotten, made up one of these little parties. When we had canvassed two or three subjects, I stole off and joined in with the next group, which was composed of Mrs. Montagu, Dr. Johnson, the Provost of Dublin<sup>4</sup>, and two other ingenious men. In this party there was a diversity of opinions, which produced a great deal of good argument and reasoning. There were several other groups less interesting to me, as they were more composed of rank than talent, and it was amusing to see how the people of sentiment singled out each other, and how the fine ladies and pretty gentlemen naturally slid into each other's society.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Burney describes 'a very fine public breakfast' Mrs. Montagu gave, at which there were 'not fewer than four or five hundred people. It was like a full Ranelagh by daylight.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, v. 302.

For 'public dinners,' see *Life*, iv. 367, n. 3. Johnson describes how Swift 'opened his house by a publick table two days a week.' *Works*, viii. 208.

<sup>2</sup> The sister of Mrs. Montagu, and the wife of that George Lewis Scott, who once 'with Johnson and Hercules made out the triumvirate comically enough.' *Ante*, i. 180.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 157, and *Life*, ii. 408. Mrs. Barbauld, reading Boswell's *Life of Johnson* the month it came out, writes:—'It is like going to Ranelagh; you meet all your acquaintance; but it is a base and

a mean thing to bring thus every idle word into judgment—the judgment of the public.' Barbauld's *Works*, ed. 1825, ii. 158. In the same year she wrote:—'Mrs. Montagu, who entertains all the aristocrats [the French fugitives], had invited a Marchioness of Boufflers and her daughter to dinner. After making her wait till six the marchioness came, and made an apology for her daughter, that just as she was going to dress she was seized with a *degout momentanee* [*sic*] *du monde*, and could not wait on her.' *Ib.* p. 139.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. John Hely Hutchinson. On his appointment Topham Beauclerk wrote to Lord Charlemont:—'I agree with you that there never was a more scandalous thing than making the man provost that is made.' *Charlemont Papers*, Hist. MSS. Comm., 1891, p. 231.

I had



I had the happiness to carry Dr. Johnson home from Hill Street, though Mrs. Montagu publicly declared she did not think it prudent to trust us together, with such a declared affection on both sides. She said she was afraid of a Scotch elopement. He has invited himself to drink tea with us to-morrow, that we may read Sir Eldred together. I shall not tell you what he said of it, but to me the best part of his flattery was, that he repeats all the best stanzas by heart, with the energy, though not with the grace of a Garrick. *Memoirs*, i. 63.

London, 1776.

Yesterday was another of the few sun-shiny-days with which human life is so scantily furnished. We spent it at Garrick's, he was in high good humour, and inexpressibly agreeable. Here was likely to have been another jostling and intersecting of our pleasures; but as they knew Johnson would be with us at seven, Mrs. Garrick was so good as to dine a little after three, and all things fell out in comfortable succession. We were at the reading of a new tragedy, and insolently and unfeelingly pronounced against it. We got home in time: I hardly ever spent an evening more pleasantly or profitably. Johnson, full of wisdom and piety, was very communicative. To enjoy Dr. Johnson perfectly, one must have him to oneself, as he seldom cares to speak in mixed parties. Our tea was not over till nine, we then fell upon Sir Eldred: he read both poems through, suggested some little alterations in the first, and did me the honour to write one whole stanza<sup>1</sup>; but in the Rock, he has not altered a word. Though only a tea-visit, he staid with us till twelve. I was quite at my ease, and never once asked him to eat<sup>2</sup> (drink he never does any thing, but tea). *Memoirs*, i. 64.

[From a letter by one of HANNAH MORE'S sisters.]

London, 1776.

If a wedding should take place before our return, don't be surprised,—between the mother of Sir Eldred, and the father of

<sup>1</sup> 'My scorn has oft the dart repell'd  
Which guileful beauty threw,  
But goodness heard, and grace beheld,

Must every heart subdue.'  
Hannah More's *Works*, ed. 1834,  
v. 241.

<sup>2</sup> For his dislike of being pressed to eat see *post*, p. 278 n.

my

my much-loved Irene ; nay, Mrs. Montagu says if tender words are the precursors of connubial engagements, we may expect great things ; for it is nothing but ‘ child ’—‘ little fool ’—‘ love,’ and ‘ dearest.’ After much critical discourse, he turns round to me, and with one of his most amiable looks, which must be seen to form the least idea of it, he says, ‘ I have heard that you are engaged in the useful and honourable employment of teaching young ladies.’ Upon which, with all the same ease, familiarity, and confidence, we should have done had only our own dear Dr. Stonehouse been present, we entered upon the history of our birth, parentage, and education ; shewing how we were born with more desires than guineas ; and how, as years increased our appetites, the cupboard at home began to grow too small to gratify them ; and how, with a bottle of water, a bed, and a blanket, we set out to seek our fortunes ; and how we found a great house, with nothing in it ; and how it was like to remain so, till, looking into our knowledge-boxes, we happened to find a little *larning*, a good thing when land is gone<sup>1</sup>, or rather none : and so at last, by giving a little of this little *larning* to those who had less, we got a good store of gold in return ; but how, alas ! we wanted the wit to keep it—‘ I love you both,’ cried the innamorato—‘ I love you all five—I never was at Bristol—I will come on purpose to see you<sup>2</sup>—what ! five women live happily together !—I will come and see you—I have spent a happy evening—I am glad I came—God for ever bless you ; you live lives to shame duchesses.’ He took his leave with so much warmth and tenderness, we were quite affected at his manner. . . .

Dr. Johnson and Hannah, last night, had a violent quarrel, till at length laughter ran so high on all sides, that argument was

<sup>1</sup> ‘ When land is gone and money spent,  
Then learning is most excellent.’

<sup>2</sup> He visited it with Boswell in the spring of this year. *Life*, iii. 50. Boswell does not mention their calling on the Mores. That they did so, when Hannah was in London,

we learn from a letter to her sisters, in which she says :—‘ I find Mr. Boswell called upon you at Bristol with Dr. Johnson ; he told me so this morning when he breakfasted here [at the Garricks] with Sir William Forbes and Dr. Johnson.’ *Memoirs*, i. 80. Of this breakfast neither she nor Boswell gives any account.

confounded

confounded in noise ; the gallant youth, at one in the morning, set us down at our lodgings. *Memoirs*, i. 66.

[From HANNAH MORE to her family.]

London, 1776.

At six, I begged leave to come home [from the Garricks], as I expected my *petite assemblée* a little after seven. Mrs. Garrick offered me all her fine things, but, as I hate admixtures of finery and meanness, I refused every thing except a little cream, and a few sorts of cakes. They came at seven. The *dramatis personæ* were, Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, and Miss Reynolds ; my beaux were Dr. Johnson, Dean Tucker<sup>1</sup>, and last, but not least in our love, David Garrick. You know that wherever Johnson is, the confinement to the tea-table is rather a durable situation ; and it was an hour and a half before I got my enlargement. However, my ears were opened, though my tongue was locked, and they all stayed till near eleven.

Garrick was the very soul of the company, and I never saw Johnson in such perfect good humour. Sally knows we have often heard that one can never properly enjoy the company of these two unless they are together<sup>2</sup>. There is great truth in this remark ; for after the Dean and Mrs. Boscawen (who were the only strangers) were withdrawn, and the rest stood up to go, Johnson and Garrick began a close encounter, telling old stories, 'e'en from their boyish days<sup>3</sup>, at Lichfield. We all stood round them above an hour, laughing in defiance of every rule of decorum and Chesterfield<sup>4</sup>. I believe we should not have thought

<sup>1</sup> Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, who had published Tracts about the American Colonies, to which Johnson had replied in *Taxation no Tyranny* (*Works*, vi. 259) and Burke with great severity in his *Speech on American Taxation*. Burke had said :—'This Dr. Tucker is already a dean, and his earliest labours in this vineyard will, I suppose, raise him to a bishopric.' Burke's *Select Works*, ed. E. J. Payne, i. 140.

Miss Burney writing of him in 1788 says, 'He is past eighty, and

has a most shrewd and keen old face.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, iv. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell describes how one day 'Garrick played round Johnson with a fond vivacity, taking hold of the breasts of his coat, and, looking up in his face with a lively archness, complimented him on the good health which he seemed then to enjoy ; while the sage, shaking his head, beheld him with a gentle complacency.' *Life*, ii. 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Othello*, Act i. sc. 3, l. 132.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, ii. 378, n. 2.

of sitting down or of parting, had not an impertinent watchman been saucily vociferous. Johnson outstaid them all, and sat with me half an hour. *Memoirs*, i. 69.

London, 1776.

Did I ever tell you what Dr. Johnson said to me of my friend the Dean of Gloucester? I asked him what he thought of him. His answer was *verbatim* as follows: 'I look upon the Dean of Gloucester to be one of the few excellent writers of this period. I differ from him in opinion, and have expressed that difference in my writings; but I hope what I wrote did not indicate what I did not feel, for I felt no acrimony. No person, however learned, can read his writings without improvement. He is sure to find something he did not know before.' I told him the Dean did not value himself on elegance of style. He said he knew nobody whose style was more perspicuous, manly, and vigorous, or better suited to his subject. I was not a little pleased with this tribute to the worthy Dean's merit, from such a judge of merit; that man, too, professedly differing from him in opinion. . . .

Keeping bad company leads to all other bad things. I have got the headache to-day, by raking out so late with that gay libertine Johnson. Do *you* know—I did not, that he wrote a quarter of the *Adventurer* <sup>1</sup>? I made him tell me all that he wrote in the 'fugitive pieces <sup>2</sup>.' *Memoirs*, i. 70.

Adelphi <sup>3</sup>, 1776.

Did I tell you we had a very agreeable day at Mrs. Boscawen's? I like Mr. Berenger <sup>4</sup> prodigiously. I met the Bunbury family at Sir Joshua's. Mr. Boswell (Corsican Boswell) was here last night <sup>5</sup>; he is a very agreeable good-natured man; he perfectly adores Johnson: they have this day set out together for Oxford, Lichfield, &c., that the Doctor may take leave of all his old friends and acquaintances, previous to his great expedition across

<sup>1</sup> He did not write so much as a quarter.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Davies, in Johnson's absence in Scotland and without his leave, published two volumes entitled *Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces*, of which all but about an

eighth was Johnson's. *Life*, ii. 270; and *ante*, i. 184.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Garrick's house. *Life*, iv. 99.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 254.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell, who keeps his narrative so closely to what concerns Johnson, does not mention this.

the

the Alps<sup>1</sup>. I lament his undertaking such a journey at his time of life, with beginning infirmities; I hope he will not leave his bones on classic ground. *Memoirs*, i. 74.

[From H. MORE to one of her sisters.]

London, 1778.

I dined with the Garricks on Thursday; he went with me in the evening, intending only to set me down at Sir Joshua's, where I was engaged to pass the evening. I was not a little proud to be the means of bringing such a beau into such a party. We found Gibbon<sup>2</sup>, Johnson, Hermes Harris, Burney, Chambers, Ramsay, the Bishop of St. Asaph, Boswell, Langton, &c.; and scarce an expletive man or woman among them. Garrick put Johnson into such good spirits that I never knew him so entertaining or more instructive. He was as brilliant as himself, and as good-humoured as any one else<sup>3</sup>. *Memoirs*, i. 146.

London, 1780.

I spent a very comfortable day yesterday with Miss Reynolds; only Dr. Johnson, and Mrs. Williams and myself. He is in but poor health, but his mind has lost nothing of its vigour. He never opens his mouth but one learns something; one is sure either of hearing a new idea, or an old one expressed in an

<sup>1</sup> Johnson wrote to Boswell on March 5 of this year:—'Of my company you cannot in the next month have much, for Mr. Thrale will take me to Italy, he says, on the first of April. . . . If you will come to me, you must come very quickly; and even then I know not but we may scour the country together, for I have a mind to see Oxford and Lichfield before I set out on this long journey.' *Life*, ii. 423. The tour was given up on the sudden death of the Thrales' only son. *Ib.* p. 468. See also *ante*, i. 263.

<sup>2</sup> On Jan. 19, 1794, Hannah More recorded:—'Heard of the death of Mr. Gibbon. . . . He too was my acquaintance. Lord, I bless thee, considering how much infidel ac-

quaintance I have had, that my soul never came into their secret.' *Memoirs*, ii. 415. The same year she recorded:—'It is now, I think, five or six years since I have been enabled, by the grace of God, in a good degree, to give up all human studies. I have not allowed myself to read any classic or pagan author for many years—I mean by myself.' *Ib.* ii. 420.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell, after a full account of the dinner, describes 'the rich assemblage' he found in the drawing-room. He continues:—'After wandering about in a kind of pleasing distraction for some time, I got into a corner with Johnson, Garrick, and Harris.' *Life*, iii. 256.

original

original manner. We did not part till eleven. He scolded me heartily, as usual, when I differed from him in opinion, and, as usual, laughed when I flattered him<sup>1</sup>. I was very bold in combatting some of his darling prejudices: nay, I ventured to defend one or two of the Puritans<sup>2</sup>, whom I forced him to allow to be good men, and good writers. He said he was not angry with me at all for liking Baxter<sup>3</sup>. He liked him himself; 'but then,' said he, 'Baxter was bred up in the establishment, and would have died in it, if he could have got the living of Kidderminster. He was a very good man.' Here he was wrong; for Baxter was offered a bishopric after the Restoration<sup>4</sup>.

I never saw Johnson really angry with me but once; and his

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 179, n.

<sup>2</sup> Her grandmother 'used to tell her younger relatives, that they would have known how to value gospel privileges, had they lived, like her, in the days of persecution, when, at midnight, pious worshippers went with stealthy steps through the snow, to hear the words of inspiration delivered by a holy man at her father's house; while her father with a drawn sword guarded the entrance.' *Memoirs*, i. 7.

<sup>3</sup> 'I asked him (writes Boswell) what works of Richard Baxter's I should read. He said, "Read any of them; they are all good."' *Life*, iv. 226. This is a somewhat daring assertion, for 'in forty years Baxter wrote 168 books, 85 of them quarto volumes.' Printed uniformly in octavo they would fill 'nearly 40,000 closely printed pages.' J. H. Davies's *Life of Baxter*, pp. 443-4.

His works were ordered by the University of Oxford to be publicly burnt in the Court of the Schools. James Wildings' *Account Book*, p. 252. Nevertheless not only Johnson praised them, but Barrow said that 'Baxter's practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted.' Calamy's

*Baxter*, ed. 1702, p. 701.

In a note on the *Life*, iv. 226, I quote Hazlitt's story, that at Kidderminster 'Baxter was almost pelted by the women for maintaining from the pulpit that "Hell was paved with infants' skulls."' This story had its origin, I conjecture, in the following circumstance:—'Once all the ignorant rout were raging mad against him for preaching to them the doctrine of original sin, and telling them, "That infants before regeneration had so much guilt and corruption as made them loathsome in the eyes of God. Whereupon they vented it about in the country, that he preached that God hated and loathed infants. So that they railed at him as he passed through the streets."' Calamy's *Baxter*, p. 22.

For his *Humble Advice to Parliament* that officers be authorized to whip those that cannot pay the fines for the non-observance of the Lord's day see Barclay's *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, 1876, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> 'Calamy and Baxter refused the sees of Lichfield and Hereford.' Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, ed. 1818, i. 204.

displeasure

displeasure did him so much honour that I loved him the better for it. I alluded rather flippantly, I fear, to some witty passage in *Tom Jones*: he replied, 'I am shocked to hear you quote from so vicious a book. I am sorry to hear you have read it: a confession which no modest lady should ever make'. I scarcely know a more corrupt work.' I thanked him for his correction; assured him I thought full as ill of it now as he did, and had only read it at an age when I was more subject to be caught by the wit, than able to discern the mischief. Of *Joseph Andrews* I declared my decided abhorrence<sup>2</sup>. He went so far as to refuse to Fielding the great talents which are ascribed to him, and broke out into a noble panegyric on his competitor, Richardson; who, he said, was as superior to him in talents as in virtue; and whom he pronounced to be the greatest genius that had shed its lustre on this path of literature<sup>3</sup>. *Memoirs*, i. 168.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Burney at the age of seventeen recorded in her Diary:—'I am now going to charm myself for the third time with poor Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*.' *Early Diary of F. Burney*, i. 45. At Streatham she recorded a conversation—Johnson was not present—when '*Candide* was produced, and Mrs. Thrale read aloud the part concerning *Pococurante*; and really the cap fitted so well that Mr. Seward could not attempt to dispute it.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ed. 1842, i. 226.

<sup>2</sup> 'I never read *Joseph Andrews*,' said Johnson. *Life*, ii. 174.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* ii. 48, 173; *ante*, i. 282.

Smollett describes Richardson's novels as 'a species of writing equally new and extraordinary, where, mingled with much superfluity, we find a sublime system of ethics, an amazing knowledge and command of human nature.' *History of England*, ed. 1800, v. 382.

Hannah More wrote in 1822:—'I have been really looking for time to read one or two of Walter Scott's

novels. In my youth *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison* were the reigning entertainment. Whatever objections may be made to them in certain respects, they contain more maxims of virtue and sound moral principle than half the books called moral.' *Memoirs*, iv. 145.

'Richardson's conversation,' writes Hawkins (p. 384), 'was of the preceptive kind, but it wanted the diversity of Johnson's, and had no intermixture of wit and humour. Richardson could never relate a pleasant story, and hardly relish one told by another: he was ever thinking of his own writings, and listening to the praises which, with an emulous profusion, his friends were incessantly bestowing on them; he would scarce enter into free conversation with any one that he thought had not read *Clarissa* or *Sir Charles Grandison*, and at best, he could not be said to be a companionable man.' Neither was Hawkins 'a clubbable man.' *Life*, i. 27, n.

'That Richardson (with all his  
The

Adelphi, 1780.

The other evening they carried me to Mrs. Ord's assembly<sup>1</sup>; I was quite dressed for the purpose. Mrs. Garrick gave me an elegant cap, and put it on herself; so that I was quite sure of being smart: but how short-lived is all human joy! and see what it is to live in the country! When I came into the drawing-rooms, I found them full of company, every human creature in deep mourning, and I, poor I, all gorgeous in scarlet. I never recollected that the mourning for some foreign Wilhelmina Jaquelina was not over. However I got over it as well as I could, made an apology, lamented the *ignorance* in which I had lately lived, and I hope this false step of mine will be buried in oblivion. There was all the old set, the Johnsons, the Burneys, the Chapones<sup>2</sup>, the Thrales, the Smelts<sup>3</sup>, the Pepyses<sup>4</sup>, the Ramsays<sup>5</sup>, and so on ad infinitum. Even Jacobite Johnson<sup>6</sup> was in deep mourning. *Memoirs*, i. 170.

London, 1780.

I was, the other night, at Mrs. Ord's. Every body was there, and in such a crowd I thought myself well off to be wedged in

twaddle) is better than Fielding, I am quite certain. There is nothing at all comparable to Lovelace in all Fielding, whose characters are common and vulgar types of squires, ostlers, lady's maids, &c., very easily drawn. . . . Think of *Clarissa* being one of Alfred de Musset's favourite books. It reminded me of our Tennyson . . . of his once saying to me of *Clarissa*, "I love those large still books." *Letters of Edward Fitzgerald*, ii. 131, 243.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson mentions going to Mrs. Ord's in April, 1780. *Letters*, ii. 146, 149.

<sup>2</sup> The 'admirable' Mrs. Chapone. *Life*, iv. 246; *Letters*, ii. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* ii. 149, n. 4. 'Mr. Smelt,' writes H. More (*Memoirs*, i. 274, 'was preceptor to the Prince of Wales, and as he would receive no settled appointment he is distinguished by

the high appellation of the King's friend.' This appellation is to be distinguished from that of the Court faction—'the King's friends.' *Life*, iv. 165, n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 244.

Mr. Pepys, advising Hannah More to choose interesting subjects for her letters, as they might hereafter be published, continues:—"Why don't you wear your ring, my dear?" says a father, in some play, to his daughter. 'Because, papa, it hurts me when anybody squeezes my hand.' 'What business have you to have your hand squeezed?' 'Certainly not; but still you know, papa, one would like to keep it in *squeezable order*.' *Memoirs*, iii. 380.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iii. 331.

<sup>6</sup> For Johnson's 'affectation of Jacobitism' see *ib.* i. 429.

with



with Mr. Smelt, Langton, Ramsay, and Johnson. Johnson told me he had been with the king that morning, who enjoined him to add Spencer [*sic*] to his *Lives of the Poets*<sup>1</sup>. I seconded the motion; he promised to think of it, but said the booksellers had not included him in their list of the poets<sup>2</sup>. . . .

Instead of going to Audley Street<sup>3</sup>, where I was invited, I went to Mrs. Reynolds's<sup>4</sup>, and sat for my picture. Just as she began to paint, in came Dr. Johnson, who staid the whole time, and said good things by way of making me look well. I did not forget to ask him for a page for your memorandum book<sup>5</sup>, and he promised to write, but said you ought to be contented with a quotation; this, however, I told him you would not accept. *Memoirs*, i. 174.

London, 1781.

Mrs. B.<sup>6</sup> having recently desired Johnson to look over her new play of the 'Siege of Sinope' before it was acted, he always found means to evade it; at last she pressed him so closely that he actually refused to do it, and told her that she herself, by carefully looking it over, would be able to see if there was any thing amiss as well as he could. 'But, sir,' said she, 'I have no time. I have already so many irons in the fire.' 'Why then, madam,' said he, (quite out of patience) 'the best thing I can advise you to do is, to put your tragedy along with your irons.' *Memoirs*, i. 200.

London, 1781.

'Praise,' says Dr. Johnson, 'is the tribute which every man is expected to pay for the grant of perusing a manuscript<sup>7</sup>.' . . . Think of Johnson's having apartments in Grosvenor Square<sup>8</sup>!

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 410.

<sup>2</sup> 'The edition of *The English Poets* was not an undertaking directed by Johnson, but he was to furnish a Preface and Life to any poet the booksellers pleased.' *Ib.* iii. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Boscawen's house. See *Memoirs*, i. 162.

<sup>4</sup> Hannah More hitherto has generally spoken of her as Miss Reynolds. She was born in 1729 (Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 4), and was fifty years old. For her oil-paintings,

which, as her brother said, 'made other people laugh and him cry,' see Northcote's *Reynolds*, ii. 160.

<sup>5</sup> A collection of autographs of eminent persons which her sister was making at that time. *Note by Roberts*.

<sup>6</sup> Frances Brooke. *Ante*, i. 322.

<sup>7</sup> For the 'exquisite address' with which he once evaded paying this tribute, see *Life*, iii. 373.

<sup>8</sup> 'Mr. Thrale (writes Boswell) had removed, I suppose by the solibut

but he says it is not half so convenient as Bolt Court. He has just finished the Poets; Pope is the last<sup>1</sup>. I am sorry he has lost so much credit by Lord Lyttleton's; he treats him almost with contempt; makes him out a poor writer, and an envious man<sup>2</sup>; speaks well only of his 'Conversion of St. Paul,' of which he says, 'it is sufficient to say it has never been answered<sup>3</sup>.' Mrs. Montagu and Mr. Pepys, his two chief surviving friends, are very angry<sup>4</sup>. *Memoirs*, i. 206.

London, 1781.

Tuesday we were a small and very choice party at Bishop Shipley's<sup>5</sup>. Lord and Lady Spencer<sup>6</sup>, Lord and Lady Al-

citation of Mrs. Thrale, to a house in Grosvenor Square.' *Life*, iv. 72.

<sup>1</sup> 'Some time in March [1781] I finished the Lives of the Poets.' *Ante*, i. 96. On March 5 he wrote to Strahan that he had done them. *Letters*, ii. 207. He did not in writing them keep to the order in which they were published.

<sup>2</sup> Miss More, I suppose, is thinking of the passage in which it is said that 'Lyttelton's zeal was considered by the courtiers not only as violent, but as acrimonious and malignant.' Perhaps however she had in mind a passage in the *Life of Shenstone*. *Works*, viii. 410; *ante*, ii. 3, n.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson describes it as 'a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer.' *Works*, viii. 490.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iv. 64, 65, n. 1; *ante*, i. 244.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell records a dinner on Thursday, April 12, 'at a Bishop's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Berrenger, and some more company.' He adds, 'I have unfortunately recorded none of Johnson's conversation.' *Life*, iv. 88. If, as seems most likely, it was this same dinner, his failure to keep a record was, no doubt, due to his being 'much disordered with wine.' His journal he had not kept diligently

for some weeks. I have little doubt that it was on Tuesday, as Miss More says, that the dinner took place. It was in Passion Week, and though Johnson made an 'ingenious defence of his dining twice abroad in Passion Week' at the houses of Bishops (*ib.*), yet I do not think he would have dined on the eve of Good Friday. On that day he wrote to Mrs. Thrale (who had just lost her husband):—'The business of Christians is now for a few days in their own bosoms.' *Letters*, ii. 214.

Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, Johnson described as 'knowing and conversible' (*Letters*, i. 400), and as a man 'who comes to every place.' *ib.* ii. 149.

He and Watson of Llandaff were the only Bishops who, at a meeting of their body convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1787, at the instance of Pitt, voted against the maintenance of the Test and Corporation Acts. *Life of Watson*, i. 181.

Heber married his grand-daughter.

<sup>6</sup> The first Earl Spencer. He died in 1783. 'He succeeded,' writes his grandson, 'to an enormous property in money, as well as land, before he was of age; and he died at forty-

thorpe

thorpe<sup>1</sup>, Sir Joshua, Langton, Boswell, Gibbon, and to my agreeable surprise, Dr. Johnson, were there.

Mrs. Garrick and he had never met since her bereavement<sup>2</sup>. I was heartily disgusted with Mr. Boswell, who came upstairs after dinner, much disordered with wine<sup>3</sup>, and addressed me in a manner that drew from me a sharp rebuke, for which I fancy he will not easily forgive me. Johnson came to see us the next morning, and made us a long visit. On Mrs. Garrick's telling him she was always more at ease with persons who had suffered the same loss with herself, he said that was a comfort she could seldom have, considering the superiority of his merit, and the cordiality of their union. He bore his strong testimony to the liberality of Garrick<sup>4</sup>. He reproved me with pretended sharpness for reading 'Les Pensees de Pascal'<sup>5</sup>, or any of the Port Royal authors, alleging that as a good Protestant, I ought to abstain from books written by Catholics. I was beginning to stand upon my defence, when he took me with both hands, and with a tear running down his cheeks, 'Child,' said he, 'with the most affecting earnestness, 'I am heartily glad that you read pious books, by whomsoever they may be written'<sup>6</sup>. *Memoirs*, i. 210.

London, 1781.

We begin now to be a little cheerful at home<sup>7</sup>, and to have our small parties. One such we have just had, and the day and

nine years old, very much in debt.' *Memoir of Viscount Althorp*, ed. 1876; Preface, p. 19.

<sup>1</sup> Second Earl and Countess Spencer. *Letters*, ii. 65, n. 9, 111, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Garrick died on Jan. 20, 1779.

<sup>3</sup> This same spring he went to the Hon. Miss Monckton's, 'certainly in extraordinary spirits, and above all fear or awe,' where Johnson, he writes, 'kept me as quiet as possible.' *Life*, iv. 109.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 437.

<sup>5</sup> He gave Boswell a copy on Good Friday, 1779. *Ante*, i. 87.

<sup>6</sup> They were a change from *Tom Jones*. *Ante*, ii. 190.

<sup>7</sup> She was living with Mrs. Garrick, who called her 'her Chaplain.' Garrick called her *Nine* (the Nine Muses). 'Nine,' he said, 'you are a *Sunday Woman*.' *Life*, iv. 96.

Of Mrs. Garrick-Mrs. Piozzi wrote in 1789:—'That woman has lived a *very wise life*, regular and steady in her conduct, attentive to every word she speaks and every step she treads, decorous in her manners and graceful in her person.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, ed. 1861, i. 302. 'There is,' wrote Miss Burney in 1771, 'something so peculiarly graceful in her motion, and pleasing in her address, that the most trifling words have evening

evening turned out very pleasant<sup>1</sup>. Johnson was in full song, and I quarrelled with him sadly. I accused him of not having done justice to the 'Allegro,' and 'Penseroso.' He spoke disparagingly of both<sup>2</sup>. I praised Lycidas, which he absolutely abused<sup>3</sup>, adding, if Milton had not written the *Paradise Lost*, he would have only ranked among the minor poets<sup>4</sup>: he was a Phidias that could cut a Colossus out of a rock, but could not cut heads out of cherry stones<sup>5</sup>.

Boswell brought to my mind the whole of a very mirthful conversation at dear Mrs. Garrick's, and my being made by Sir William Forbes<sup>6</sup> the umpire in a trial of skill between Garrick and Boswell, which could most nearly imitate Dr. Johnson's manner. I remember I gave it for Boswell in familiar conversation, and for Garrick in reciting poetry<sup>7</sup>. Mrs. Boscawen shone with her usual mild lustre. *Memoirs*, i. 212.

weight and power, when spoken by her to oblige and even delight.' *Early Diary of F. Burney*, i. 111.

<sup>1</sup> It was on April 20 the party was held. Boswell writes of it, 'I spent with Johnson one of the happiest days that I remember to have enjoyed in the whole course of my life.' *Life*, iv. 96.

<sup>2</sup> It must have been by way of contradiction, for in the *Life of Milton* he says:—'Every man that reads them reads them with pleasure. . . . They are two noble efforts of imagination.' *Works*, vii. 121-2.

Dr. Warton, twenty-five years earlier, spoke of them as poems 'which are now universally known; but which by a strange fatality lay in a sort of obscurity, the private enjoyment of a few curious readers, till they were set to admirable music by Mr. Handel.' *Essay on Pope*, ed. 1762, i. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Of *Lycidas* Johnson wrote:—'Surely no man could have fancied that he read it with pleasure, had he not known the author.' *Works*, vii. 121.

<sup>4</sup> *Paradise Lost* Johnson describes as 'a poem which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance the second, among the productions of the human mind.' *Ib.* vii. 125. Macaulay thought 'that if only the first four books of *Paradise Lost* had been preserved Milton would then have been placed above Homer.' Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ed. 1877, ii. 200.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iv. 305.

<sup>6</sup> Scott's 'lamented Forbes.' *Marmion*, canto iv, Introduction. See *Life*, v. 24.

<sup>7</sup> 'I recollect Garrick's exhibiting him to me one day, as if saying, "Davy has some convivial pleasantries about him, but 'tis a futile fellow"; which he uttered perfectly with the tone and air of Johnson.' *Ib.* ii. 326.

Charlotte Burney describes how one day 'Garrick took off Dr. Johnson most admirably; his *see-saw*, his *pawing*, his very *look*, and his voice. He took him off in a speech

London, 1782.

Poor Johnson is in a bad state of health<sup>1</sup>; I fear his constitution is broken up: I am quite grieved at it, he will not leave an abler defender of religion and virtue behind him, and the following little touch of tenderness which I heard of him last night from one of the Turk's Head Club<sup>2</sup>, endears him to me exceedingly. There are always a great many candidates ready, when any vacancy happens in that club, and it requires no small interest and reputation to get elected<sup>3</sup>; but upon Garrick's death, when numberless applications were made to succeed him, Johnson was deaf to them all; he said, No, there never could be found any successor worthy of such a man; and he insisted upon it there should be a year's widowhood in the club, before they thought of a new election<sup>4</sup>. In Dr. Johnson some contrarieties very harmoniously meet; if he has too little charity for the opinions of others, and too little patience with their faults, he has the greatest tenderness for their persons. He told me the other day, he hated to hear people whine about metaphysical distresses<sup>5</sup>, when there was so much want and hunger in the world. I told him I supposed then he never wept at any tragedy but Jane Shore, who had died for want of a loaf<sup>6</sup>. He

that has *stuck in his gizzard* ever since some friendly person was so obliging as to repeat it to him: "Yes, yes, Davy has some convivial pleasantries in him; but 'tis a futile Fellow." A little while after he took him off in one of his *own convivial pleasantries*. "No, Sir, I'm for the musick of the ancients, it has been corrupted so." *Early Diary of F. Burney*, ii. 282, where the editor has an interesting note on 'the musick of the ancients.'

<sup>1</sup> The entry was made about the middle of April. For his Latin letter about his health, dated *Maiis Calendis*, see *Life*, iv. 143.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Club which existed long without a name, but at Mr. Garrick's funeral became distinguished by the title of THE LITERARY CLUB,' writes

Boswell (*Life*, i. 477), who was evidently proud of the name. The members however cling as much to the title of *The Club* as the head of a Scotch clan clings to *The* before his name.

<sup>3</sup> 'A single black-ball excludes a candidate.' *Ib.* iii. 116. Lord Camden (the ex-Lord Chancellor) and the Bishop of Chester were rejected on the same day. *Ib.* iii. 311, n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Garrick died on Jan. 20, 1779. The next election was Bishop Shipley's in Nov. 1780. Croker's *Boswell*, ed. 1844, ii. 327.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 252.

<sup>6</sup> 'Nor does Rowe much interest or affect the auditor except in Jane Shore, who is always seen and heard with pity.' *Works*, vii. 416.

Charles Burney's little daughter, called

called me a saucy girl<sup>1</sup>, but did not deny the inference. *Memoirs*, i. 249.

London, 1782.

I dined very pleasantly one day last week at the Bishop of Chester's<sup>2</sup>. Johnson was there, and the Bishop was very desirous to draw him out, as he wished to show him off to some of the company who had never seen him. He begged me to sit next him at dinner, and to devote myself to making him talk. To this end, I consented to talk more than became me, and our stratagem succeeded. You would have enjoyed seeing him take me by the hand in the middle of dinner, and repeat with no small enthusiasm, many passages from the 'Fair Penitent'<sup>3</sup>, &c. I urged him to take a *little* wine, he replied, 'I can't drink a *little*, child, therefore I never touch it. Abstinence is as easy to me, as *temperance* would be difficult.' He was very good-humoured and gay. One of the company happened to say a word about poetry, 'Hush, hush,' said he, 'it is dangerous to say a word of poetry before her; it is talking of the art of war before Hannibal.' He continued his jokes, and lamented that I had not married Chatterton, that posterity might have seen a propagation of poets<sup>4</sup>. *Memoirs*, i. 251.

Oxford, June 13, 1782.

Who do you think is my principal Cicerone at Oxford? Only Dr. Johnson<sup>5</sup>! and we do so gallant it about! You cannot imagine with what delight he showed me every part of his own College (Pembroke), nor how rejoiced Henderson<sup>6</sup> looked, to

'being in the front of a stage-box at a country theatre, and hearing the wretched Jane in vain supplicating "a morsel to support her famished soul," and crying out, "Give me but to eat!" said, "Madame, will you have my OLLANGE."' H. More's *Memoirs*, iii. 72.

<sup>1</sup> She was thirty-seven years old.

<sup>2</sup> On April 23 or 24. *Letters*, ii. 250. The Bishop was Beilby Porteus. *Life*, iii. 413.

<sup>3</sup> By Nicholas Rowe; 'one of the most pleasing tragedies on the stage,' Johnson calls it. *Works*, vii. 408.

He told Nichols about this time that 'he had not read one of Rowe's plays for thirty years.' *Life*, iv. 36, n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Chatterton was born in Bristol in 1752, and Hannah More came to live there about 1756. *Memoirs*, i. 14.

<sup>5</sup> He was the guest of Dr. Edwards, Vice-Principal of Jesus College. *Letters*, ii. 257, n. 4.

<sup>6</sup> 'A student of Pembroke College, celebrated for his wonderful acquirements in Alchymy, Judicial Astrology, and other abstruse and curious learning.' *Life*, iv. 298.

Richard Sharp told Francis Horner  
make

make one in the party. Dr. Adams, the master of Pembroke, had contrived a very pretty piece of gallantry. We spent the day and evening at his house. After dinner Johnson begged to conduct me to see the College, he would let no one show it me but himself,—‘This was my room; this Shenstone’s<sup>1</sup>.’ Then after pointing out all the rooms of the poets who had been of his college, ‘In short,’ said he, ‘we were a nest of singing-birds’<sup>2</sup>—

‘that though Henderson had much quackery before ignorant people to astonish them with his eccentricities of erudition, which became so much a habit that he was generally quackish in the selection of his subjects, the manner was full of ability; and that he had a very powerful understanding.’ *Memoirs of F. Horner*, i. 241.

Lamb wrote to Coleridge in June, 1796:—‘Of the Monody on Henderson I will here only notice these lines, as superlatively excellent. That energetic one, “Shall I not praise thee, scholar, Christian, friend,” like to that beautiful climax of Shakespeare’s “King, Hamlet, Royal Dane, Father<sup>1</sup> ;” “yet memory turns from little men to thee,” “And sported careless round their fellow child.”’ *Ainger’s Letters of Lamb*, i. 14.

De Quincey tells how ‘when Henderson was disputing at a dinner party, his opponent being pressed by some argument too strong for his logic or his temper, replied by throwing a glass of wine in his face; upon which Henderson . . . coolly wiped it, and said, “This, Sir, is a digression; now, if you please, for the argument.”’ *De Quincey’s Works*, xii. 192.

The Monody was by Joseph Cottle.

Coleridge in his lines *To the Author of Poems*, &c., says:—

‘But lo! your Henderson awakes the Muse—

His Spirit beckoned from the  
Mountain’s height,  
You left the plain, and soared mid  
richer views!

So Nature mourned, when sunk  
the First Day’s light,  
With stars, unseen before, spangling  
her robes of night.’

Coleridge’s *Poems*, ed. 1859, p. 53.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson’s room over the gateway is in its fabric much as it was when Hannah More saw it; Shenstone’s is no longer known.

<sup>2</sup> ‘From school Shenstone was sent to Pembroke College in Oxford, a society which, for half a century, has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature.’ *Works*, viii. 408. For a list of the eminent men see *Life*, i. 75; where Boswell also records, that ‘being himself a poet, Johnson was peculiarly happy in mentioning how many of the sons of Pembroke were poets; adding, with a smile of sportive triumph, “Sir, we are a nest of singing-birds.”’

The College has not been wanting in scholars in later years. Among my contemporaries were the late Dr. Edwin Hatch, the learned theologian; Dr. Edward Moore, the editor of Dante, and Canon Dixon, the author of *The History of the Church of England*, and of finer poems than were sung by most of last-century’s nest of singing-birds.

<sup>1</sup> ‘I’ll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane.’—Act. i. Sc. 4.

'Here we walked, there we played at cricket'.<sup>1</sup> He ran over with pleasure the history of the juvenile days he passed there. When we came into the common room<sup>2</sup>, we spied a fine large print of Johnson, framed and hung up that very morning, with this motto: '*And is not Johnson ours, himself a host.*' Under which stared you in the face, 'From *Miss More's Sensibility*'.<sup>3</sup> This little incident amused us;—but alas! Johnson looks very ill indeed—spiritless and wan. However, he made an effort to be cheerful, and I exerted myself much to make him so.

We are just setting off to spend a day or two at the Bishop of Llandaff's<sup>4</sup>, near Wallingford. But first I must tell you I am engaged to dine on my return with the learned Dr. Edwards of Jesus College, to meet Dr. Johnson, Thomas Warton, and whatever else is most learned and famous in this University<sup>5</sup>.  
*Memoirs*, i. 261.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson must have pointed to a field outside the College precincts, for within them there was no room for cricket.

<sup>2</sup> In the Common Room, which then stood in the garden, Johnson, in the days when it was open to the undergraduates, 'used to play at draughts with Phil Jones and Fludyer.' *Life*, ii. 444. By the year 1776, in some of the Colleges, the students were excluded from the Common Room. *Ib.* ii. 443. The Junior Common Room of Pembroke College kept its centenary in 1894.

<sup>3</sup> 'Though purer flames thy hal-  
low'd zeal inspire

Than e'er were kindled at the  
Muse's fire;

Thee, mitred Chester', all the  
Nine shall boast;

And is not Johnson ours? him-  
self an host.'

In the Senior Common Room there now hangs a fine portrait of Johnson by Reynolds, the gift of

the late Mr. Andrew Spottiswoode.

See *Life*, iv. 151, n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Shute Barrington. Dr. Watson who succeeded him, settling on the banks of Windermere, did not live any nearer his diocese, and scarcely ever visited it. After he had been Bishop twenty-seven years he boasts of holding 'a confirmation at a place where no Bishop had ever held a confirmation before, Merthyr Tidvil' With perfect complacency he writes:—'I have spent above twenty years in this delightful country (Westmoreland)... I have much recovered my health, entirely preserved my independence, set an example of a spirited husbandry to the country, and honourably provided for my family.' *Life of Bishop Watson*, i. 389; ii. 367.

<sup>5</sup> For the sudden rise this week of the 'battels' of many of the Fellows and Scholars of Jesus College see *Letters*, ii. 261, n. 1.

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Beilby Porteus, then Bishop of Chester. See his admirable poem on "Death."' *Note by H. More.*



London, *March 29, 1783.*

Hoole has just sent me his preface to his translation of Ariosto, which is coming out; an expensive present; since I can now do no less than subscribe for the whole work, and a guinea and a half for a translation of a book from the original is dearish<sup>1</sup>. Saturday I went to Mrs. Reynolds's to meet Sir Joshua and Dr. Johnson; the latter is vastly recovered. Our conversation ran very much upon religious opinions, chiefly those of the Roman Catholics. He took the part of the Jesuits, and I declared myself a Jansenist. He was very angry because I quoted Boileau's bon mot upon the Jesuits, that they had lengthened the creed and shortened the decalogue; but I continued sturdily to vindicate my old friends of the Port Royal. On Tuesday I was at Mrs. Vesey's assembly, which was too full to be very pleasant. She dearly loves company; and as she is connected with almost every thing that is great in the good sense of the word, she is always sure to have too much. I inquired after the Shipleys, who had promised to meet us there, and was told they had just sent an excuse; for that Anna Maria and Sir William<sup>2</sup> were at that moment in the act of marrying. They will be now completely banished, but as they will be banished together, they do not think it a hardship. May God bless them, and may his stupendous learning be sanctified! I went and sat the other morning with Dr. Johnson, who is still far from well. Our conversation was very interesting, but so

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Bentham says that 'Hoole got money by plays and translations, which he got people to subscribe for. He even asked me for subscriptions, though he lived in style—asked me who lived in beggary!' Bentham's *Works*, x. 184.

Bentham's characters must be received with caution. Mill wrote on Oct. 14, 1843, about Bowring's *Life of Bentham*:—'Mr. Bentham's best friends well knew—I have heard some of those who were most attached to him lament—his entire incapacity to estimate the characters

even of those with whom he associated intimately. . . . The opinions he expressed of people depended very much upon their personal relations to himself.' *Macvey Napier Corres.* p. 441.

La Rochefoucauld says (*Maximes*, No. 88):—'L'amour-propre nous augmente ou nous diminue les bonnes qualités de nos amis, à proportion de la satisfaction que nous avons d'eux; et nous jugeons de leur mérite par la manière dont ils vivent avec nous.'

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Jones. *Life*, iv. 75, n. 3.

many

many people came in, that I began to feel foolish, and soon I sneaked off. He has written some very pretty verses on his friend Levett<sup>1</sup>, which he gave me, and which I will send you when I can. He was all kindness to me. *Memoirs*, i. 278.

London, May 5, 1783.

Saturday we had a dinner at home, Mrs. Carter, Miss Hamilton, the Kennicotts<sup>2</sup>, and Dr. Johnson. Poor Johnson exerted himself exceedingly; but he was very ill and looked so dreadfully, that it quite grieved me<sup>3</sup>. He is more mild and complacent than he used to be. His sickness seems to have softened his mind, without having at all weakened it. I was struck with the mild radiance of this setting sun. We had but a small party of such of his friends as we knew would be most agreeable to him, and as we were all very attentive, and paid him the homage he both expects and deserves, he was very communicative, and of course instructive and delightful in the highest degree. *Memoirs*, i. 280.

April, 1784.

I had a very civil note<sup>4</sup> from Johnson about a week since; it was written in good spirits; and as it was a volunteer, and not an answer, it looks as if he were really better. He tells me he longs to see me, to praise the Bas Bleu<sup>5</sup> as much as envy can praise;—there's for you!

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Kennicott was a Canon of Christ Church and author of the *Collations*. *Life*, ii. 128; *Letters*, ii. 77, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> He had just gone through a three days' course of violent physicking. *Letters*, ii. 294.

<sup>4</sup> It has not been published.

<sup>5</sup> On April 19 he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'Miss Moore [*sic*] has written a poem called *Le Bas Bleu*; which is in my opinion a very great performance. It wanders about in manuscript.' *Letters*, ii. 390. See *ib. n. 4* for some extracts from it, and *Life*, iv. 108. Hannah More,

in 1825, mentioning the death of Sir W. W. Pepys says:—'Our acquaintance began nearly fifty years ago; he was the *Lælius* in my little poem *The Bas Bleu*. As he was the chief ornament, so he was the last survivor of the select society which gave birth to that trifle.' *Memoirs*, iv. 238.

'General Paoli described a Bluestocking meeting very well:—Here, four or five old ladies talking formally, and a priest (Dr. Barnard, Provost of Eton), with a wig like the globe, sitting in the middle, as if he were confessing them.' Rogers's *Boswelliana*, p. 321.

Did

Did I tell you I went to see Dr. Johnson? Miss Monckton<sup>1</sup> carried me, and we paid him a very long visit. He received me with the greatest kindness and affection, and as to the Bas Bleu, all the flattery I ever received from every body together would not make up his sum. He said, but I seriously insist you do not tell any body, for I am ashamed of writing it even to you;—he said there was no name in poetry that might not be glad to own it<sup>2</sup>. You cannot imagine how I stared; all this from Johnson, that parsimonious praiser! I told him I was delighted at his approbation; he answered quite characteristically, ‘And so you may, for I give you the opinion of a man who does not rate his judgment in these things very low, I can tell you.’ *Memoirs*, i. 319.

1784.

My appointment at Oxford was to flirt with Dr. Johnson, but he was a recreant knight, and had deserted<sup>3</sup>. He had been for a fortnight at the house of my friend Dr. Adams, the head of Pembroke, with Mr. Boswell; but the latter being obliged to go to town, Johnson was not thought well enough to remain behind, and afterwards to travel by himself; so that he left my friend's house the very day I got thither, though they told me he did me the honour to be very angry and out of humour, that I did not come so soon as I had promised. I am grieved to find that his mind is still a prey to melancholy, and that the fear of death operates on him to the destruction of his peace. It is grievous—it is unaccountable! He who has the Christian hope upon the best foundation; whose faith is strong, whose morals are irreproachable<sup>4</sup>! But I am willing to ascribe it to bad nerves, and bodily disease. *Memoirs*, i. 330.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 108, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson said to Mrs. Thrale:—‘I know nobody who blasts by praise as you do; for whenever there is exaggerated praise everybody is set against a character.’ *Ib.* iv. 81. See also *ib.* iii. 225, where Mrs. Thrale said:—‘I do not know for certain what will please Dr. Johnson; but I know for certain that it will displease him to praise anything,

even what he likes, extravagantly.’

<sup>3</sup> He went to Oxford on June 3, 1784, and left it on June 19. *Life*, iv. 283, 311.

<sup>4</sup> ‘MRS. ADAMS. “You seem, Sir, to forget the merits of our Redeemer.” JOHNSON. “Madam, I do not forget the merits of my Redeemer; but my Redeemer has said that he will set some on his right hand and some on his left.”—He was in gloomy

Poor

Hampton, December, 1784.

Poor dear Johnson! he is past all hope. The dropsy has brought him to the point of death; his legs are scarified: but nothing will do. I have, however, the comfort to hear that his dread of dying is in a great measure subdued; and now he says 'the bitterness of death is past'.<sup>1</sup> He sent the other day for Sir Joshua; and after much serious conversation told him he had three favours to beg of him, and he hoped he would not refuse a dying friend, be they what they would. Sir Joshua promised. The first was that he would never paint on a Sunday; the second that he would forgive him thirty pounds that he had lent him, as he wanted to leave them to a distressed family; the third was that he would read the bible whenever he had an opportunity; and that he would never omit it on a Sunday. There was no difficulty but upon the *first* point; but at length Sir Joshua promised to gratify him in all<sup>2</sup>. How delighted should I be to hear the dying discourse of this great and good man, especially now that faith has subdued his fears. I wish I could see him.

[As the very interesting particulars contained in the following letter, found among Mrs. H. More's papers, may not be generally known, we shall perhaps be excused for interrupting the series of her letters by its insertion.—Note by Roberts.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I ought to apologize for delaying so long to gratify your wishes and fulfil my promise, by committing to paper a conversation

agitation, and said, "I'll have no more on't." *Life*, iv. 300.

Mrs. Adams did not outlive him many months. Early in the summer of 1785 Hannah More records (*Memoirs*, i. 404):—"The wife of Dr. Adams is dead, and his friends prevailed on him to set out for London, to be out of the way during the last sad ceremonies; so he came to the hotel next to us, in order for me to devote myself to him as much as possible. Our first meeting was very

affecting. I never saw anything so meek and so resigned. But it is a heavy blow at almost eighty."

<sup>1</sup> 'Surely the bitterness of death is past.' 1 Sam. xv. 32.

'The Doctor, from the time that he was certain his death was near, appeared to be perfectly resigned.' *Life*, iv. 417; *ante*, i. 448; ii. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell says that 'Sir Joshua readily acquiesced.' *Life*, iv. 414. The first promise he did not keep. *Ib.* n. 1. See *ante*, ii. 5.

which

which I had with the late Rev. Mr. Storry, of Colchester, respecting Dr. Johnson. I will now however proceed at once to record, to the best of my recollection, the substance of our discourse.

We were riding together near Colchester, when I asked Mr. Storry whether he had ever heard that Dr. Johnson expressed great dissatisfaction with himself on the approach of death, and that in reply to friends, who, in order to comfort him, spoke of his writings in defence of virtue and religion, he had said, 'admitting all you urge to be true, how can I tell when I have done enough?'

Mr. S. assured me that what I had just mentioned was perfectly correct; and then added the following interesting particulars.

Dr. Johnson, said he, did feel as you describe, and was not to be comforted by the ordinary topics of consolation which were addressed to him. In consequence he desired to see a clergyman, and particularly described the views and character of the person whom he wished to consult. After some consideration a Mr. Winstanley was named, and the Dr. requested Sir John Hawkins to write a note in his name, requesting Mr. W.'s attendance as a minister<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. W., who was in a very weak state of health, was quite overpowered on receiving the note, and felt appalled by the very thought of encountering the talents and learning of Dr. Johnson. In his embarrassment he went to his friend Colonel Pownall, and told him what had happened, asking, at the same time, for his advice how to act. The Colonel, who was a pious man, urged him immediately to follow what appeared to be a remarkable leading of providence, and for the time argued his friend out of his nervous apprehension: but after he had left Colonel Pownall, Mr. W.'s fears returned in so great a degree as to prevail upon him to abandon the thought of a personal interview with the Dr. He determined in consequence to write him a letter: that letter I think Mr. Storry said he had seen,—at least a copy of it, and part of it he repeated to me as follows:—

Sir—I beg to acknowledge the honour of your note, and am

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Hawkins has no mention of this.

very sorry that the state of my health prevents my compliance with your request ; but my nerves are so shattered that I feel as if I should be quite confounded by your presence, and instead of promoting, should only injure the cause in which you desire my aid. Permit me therefore to write what I should wish to say were I present. I can easily conceive what would be the subjects of your inquiry. I can conceive that the views of yourself have changed with your condition, and that on the near approach of death, what you once considered mere peccadillos have risen into mountains of guilt, while your best actions have dwindled into nothing. On whichever side you look you see only positive transgressions or defective obedience ; and hence, in self-despair, are eagerly inquiring ‘What shall I do to be saved?’ I say to you, in the language of the Baptist, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’ &c. &c.

When Sir John Hawkins came to this part of Mr. W.’s letter, the Dr. interrupted him, anxiously asking, ‘*Does he say so?* Read it again! Sir John.’ Sir John complied : upon which the Dr. said, ‘I must see that man ; write again to him.’ A second note was accordingly sent : but even this repeated solicitation could not prevail over Mr. Winstanley’s fears. He was led, however, by it to write again to the Doctor, renewing and enlarging upon the subject of his first letter ; and these communications, together with the conversation of the late Mr. Latrobe <sup>1</sup>, who was a particular friend of Dr. Johnson, appear to have been blessed by God in bringing this great man to the renunciation of self, and a simple reliance on Jesus as his Saviour, thus also communicating to him that peace which he had found the world could not give, and which when the world was fading from his view, was to fill the void, and dissipate the gloom, even of the valley of the shadow of death. *Memoirs*, i. 376.

H. MORE to her sister.

Hampton <sup>2</sup>, 1785.

Mr. Pepys wrote me a very kind letter on the death of Johnson, thinking I should be impatient to hear something relating to his last hours. Dr. Brocklesby, his physician, was with him ; he

<sup>1</sup> A Moravian. *Life*, iv. 410.

<sup>2</sup> At Mrs. Garrick’s house.

said

said to him a little before he died, Doctor, you are a worthy man, and my friend, but I am afraid you are not a Christian ! what can I do better for you than offer up in your presence a prayer to the great God that you may become a Christian in my sense of the word. Instantly he fell on his knees, and put up a fervent prayer ; when he got up he caught hold of his hand with great earnestness, and cried, Doctor, you do not say Amen. The Doctor looked foolishly, but after a pause, cried, Amen ! Johnson said, My dear doctor, believe a dying man, there is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God ; go home, write down my prayer, and every word I have said, and bring it me to-morrow. Brocklesby did so<sup>1</sup>. . . .

No action of his life became him like the leaving it. His death makes a kind of era in literature<sup>2</sup> ; piety and goodness will not easily find a more able defender, and it is delightful to see him set, as it were, his dying seal to the professions of his life, and to the truth of Christianity. *Memoirs*, i. 392.

Adelphi, 1785.

Boswell tells me he is printing *anecdotes* of Johnson, not his *life*, but, as he has the vanity to call it, his *pyramid*<sup>3</sup>. I besought his tenderness for our virtuous and most revered departed friend, and begged he would mitigate some of his asperities. He said, roughly, 'He would not cut off his claws, nor make a tiger a cat, to please anybody.' It will, I doubt not, be a very amusing book, but I hope not an indiscreet one ; he has great enthusiasm, and some fire<sup>4</sup>. *Memoirs*, i. 403.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 414, 416 ; *ante*, ii. 146, 152.

<sup>2</sup> 'He has made a chasm, which not only nothing can fill up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up.' *Life*, iv. 420.

<sup>3</sup> 'What Boswell was printing in 1785 was his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 30.

<sup>5</sup> The following is endorsed on a letter addressed by Boswell to Lord Buchan on Jan. 5, 1767 :— 'Boswell was my relative by his

mother. . . . In consequence of a letter he wrote to me I desired him to call at Mr. Pitt's, and took care to be with him when he was introduced. . . . Boswell came in the Corsican dress and presented a letter from Paoli. Lord Chatham smiled, but received him very graciously in his pompous manner. Boswell had genius, but wanted ballast to counteract his whim. He preferred being a showman to keeping a shop of his own.' *Buchan MSS.* quoted in Croker's *Boswell*, x. 122.

I remember

I remember that my dear old Dr. Johnson once asked me, 'What was the greatest compliment you could pay to an author?' I replied, 'To quote him'. 'Thou art right, my child,' said he. *Memoirs*, iv. 20.

Dr. Johnson once said to me: 'Never mind whether they praise or abuse your writings; anything is tolerable, except oblivion'. *Memoirs*, ii. 169.

'I have lost so many of my contemporaries within the last year [1824] that I am ready to ask with Dr. Johnson, "where is the world into which I was born?"' *Memoirs*, iv. 203.

1829 [February or March].

Joy, joy, joy to you, to me! Joy to the individual victorious Protestant! Joy to the great Protestant cause! That dear valuable Sir T. Acland brought the first news of a great majority<sup>3</sup>; and though I could scarcely doubt of our success, yet I applied the words once used to me by my old friend, Dr. Johnson, 'My dear, I must always doubt of that which has not yet happened.' *Memoirs*, iv. 297.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps she got this from *The Tatler*, No. 205, where it is said of Dr. South:—'The best way to praise this author is to quote him.'

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 375; v. 273.

In 1803 writing of the attacks made on her, including 'Three years' monthly attack from the *Anti-Jacobin*, she says:—'I have to lament that through my want of his [Baxter's] faith and piety, they had nearly destroyed my life. In one thing only I had the advantage, I never once replied to my calumniators.' *Memoirs*, iii. 203. To judge by the index of the *Anti-Jacobin* the attacks were rather yearly than monthly. In the volume for 1802, p. 429, she is charged 'with having received the Sacrament from the hands of Mr. Jay, the pastor of

a dissenting meeting-house at Bath.' The same orthodox Review quotes (1802, p. 429) from a scurrilous *Life of Hannah More* a foul attack on her, in which it is implied that at the expense of her chastity 'she purchased an annuity of £200 at a very easy rate' [the italics are in the original]. The canting reviewer adds that 'such loose imputations disgrace the biographer.'

<sup>3</sup> The news was the defeat of Peel at the Oxford University election, when the Duke of Wellington and he brought in their Catholic Relief Bill. 'The Convocation,' wrote Greville on Feb. 27, 'presents a most disgraceful scene of riot and uproar.' C. C. Greville's *Journals*, ed. 1874, 1st Ser. i. 177.



## ANECDOTES AND REMARKS

BY BISHOP PERCY

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[THE following anecdotes and remarks are taken from the third edition of Dr. Robert Anderson's *Life of Johnson*, published in 1815. They had been recorded by Percy, in 1805, in an interleaved copy of the second edition. A few of his entries are not worth reprinting; others I have already incorporated as notes, and so do not include here.]

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AT Stourbridge Johnson's genius was so distinguished that, although little better than a school-boy, he was admitted into the best company of the place, and had no common attention paid to his conversation; of which remarkable instances were long remembered there<sup>1</sup>. He had met even with George, afterwards Lord Lyttleton; with whom, having some colloquial disputes, he is supposed to have conceived that prejudice which so improperly influenced him in the *Life* of that worthy nobleman<sup>2</sup>. But this could scarcely have happened when he was a boy of fifteen, and, therefore, it is probable he occasionally

<sup>1</sup> Bridgenorth, Percy's birthplace, is only a few miles from Stourbridge. He was Johnson's junior by nineteen years.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 57. *Ante*, i. 257. Percy, who was chaplain to the King, devoted to the Duke of Northumberland, and whose wife had been nurse to Prince Edward (*ante*, ii. 64), was naturally shocked at Johnson's ridicule of a worthy

nobleman but a poor writer. Johnson disliked moreover 'the most vulgar Whiggism' of Lyttleton's *History of Henry II.* *Life*, ii. 221. Hume wrote to Adam Smith on July 14, 1767:—'Have you read Lord Lyttleton? Do you not admire his Whiggery and his Piety; Qualities so useful both for this world and the next?' *MSS. Royal Society of Edinburgh.*

visited

visited Stourbridge, during his residence at Birmingham, before he removed to London<sup>1</sup>. (Pages 20, 66.)

Johnson's countenance was not so harsh and rugged as has been misrepresented, and no otherwise disfigured by the King's Evil than its having a scar under one of his jaws, where some humour had been opened, but afterwards healed. And this being only a simple scar, attended with no discoloration, excited no disgust<sup>2</sup>. (Page 15.)

His countenance, when in a good humour, was not disagreeable. His face clear, his complexion good, and his features not ill-formed, many ladies have thought they might not be unattractive when he was young<sup>3</sup>. Much misrepresentation has prevailed on this subject among such as did not personally know him. (Page 49.)

That he had some whimsical peculiarities of the nature described [by Boswell, *Life*, i. 484], is certainly true; but there is no reason to believe they proceeded from any superstitious motives, wherein religion was concerned; they are rather to be ascribed to his 'mental distempers.' (Page 487.)

If Johnson appeared a little unwieldy, it was owing to the defect of his sight, and not from corpulency. (Page 468.)

Johnson was so extremely short-sighted<sup>4</sup>, that he had no

<sup>1</sup> That this is not likely is shown by a passage in one of his *Letters* (i. 177) where speaking of a proposed visit to Mr. Lyttelton at Hagley, near Stourbridge, he says:—"I should have had the opportunity . . . of recalling the images of sixteen and reviewing my conversations with poor Ford." See *Life*, i. 49. He seems to have met Lyttelton at Mr. Fitzherbert's. *Ante*, i. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 344.

<sup>4</sup> 'PERCY. "But, my good friend, you are short-sighted, and do not

see so well as I do." I wondered at Dr. Percy's venturing thus. Dr. Johnson said nothing at the time; but inflammable particles were collecting for a cloud to burst. In a little while Dr. Percy said something more in disparagement of Pennant. JOHNSON (pointedly). "This is the resentment of a narrow mind, because he did not find every thing in Northumberland." PERCY (feeling the stroke). "Sir, you may be as rude as you please." JOHNSON. "Hold, Sir! Don't talk of rudeness; remember, Sir, you told me (puffing conception

conception of rural beauties; and, therefore, it is not to be wondered, that he should prefer the conversation of the metropolis to the silent groves and views of Greenwich<sup>1</sup>; which, however delightful, he could not see. In his Tour through the Highlands of Scotland, he has somewhere observed, that one mountain was like another<sup>2</sup>; so utterly unconscious was he of the wonderful variety of sublime and beautiful scenes those mountains exhibited. The writer of this remark was once present when the case of a gentleman was mentioned, who, having with great taste and skill formed the lawns and plantations about his house into most beautiful landscapes, to complete one part of the scenery, was obliged to apply for leave to a neighbour with whom he was not upon cordial terms<sup>3</sup>; when Johnson made the following remark, which at once shews what ideas he had of landscape improvement, and how happily he applied the most common incidents to moral instruction. 'See how inordinate desires enslave man! No desire can be more innocent than to have a pretty garden, yet, indulged to excess, it has made this poor man submit to beg a favour of his enemy.' (Page 520.)

This [the statement that 'when Johnson did eat it was voraciously'] is extremely exaggerated. He ate heartily, having a good appetite, but not with the voraciousness described by

hard with passion struggling for a vent) I was short-sighted. We have done with civility. We are to be as rude as we please." PERCY. "Upon my honour, Sir, I did not mean to be uncivil." JOHNSON. "I cannot say so, Sir; for I *did* mean to be uncivil, thinking *you* had been uncivil." *Life*, iii. 273.

<sup>1</sup> 'We walked in the evening in Greenwich Park. He asked me, I suppose, by way of trying my disposition, "Is not this very fine?" Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of Nature, and being more delighted with the busy hum of

men, I answered, "Yes, Sir; but not equal to Fleet-street." JOHNSON. "You are right, Sir." *Ib.* i. 461.

<sup>2</sup> 'The hills exhibit very little variety, being almost wholly covered with dark heath, and even that seems to be checked in its growth.' *Works*, ix. 35. 'The Highlands are very uniform, for there is little variety in universal barrenness.' *Letters*, i. 250.

<sup>3</sup> Shenstone perhaps is meant, who 'was not upon cordial terms' with his neighbours the Lytteltons. *Works*, viii. 410; *ante*, ii. 3.

Mr.

Mr. Boswell<sup>1</sup>; all whose extravagant accounts must be read with caution and abatement. (Page 471.)

There was no great cordiality between Garrick and Johnson; and as the latter kept him much in awe when present, Garrick, when his back was turned, repaid the restraint with ridicule of him and his dulcinea, which should be read with great abatement; for, though Garrick, at the moment, to indulge a spirit of drollery, and to entertain the company, gave distorted caricatures of Mrs. Johnson and her spouse, it would certainly have shocked him, had he known that these sportive distortions were to be handed down to posterity as faithful pictures. By his caricature mimicry he could turn the most respectable characters and unaffected manners into ridicule<sup>2</sup>. (Pages 50, 91.)

The extraordinary prejudice and dislike of Swift, manifested on all occasions by Johnson, whose political opinions coincided exactly with his<sup>3</sup>, has been difficult to account for; and is therefore attributed to his failing in getting a degree, which Swift might not chuse to solicit, for a reason given below. The real cause is believed to be as follows: The Rev. Dr. Madden, who distinguished himself so laudably by giving premiums to the young students of Dublin College, for which he had raised a fund by applying for contributions to the nobility and gentry of Ireland<sup>4</sup>, had solicited the same from Swift, when he was

<sup>1</sup> 'Everything about his character and manners was forcible and violent; there never was any moderation; many a day did he fast, many a year did he refrain from wine; but when he did eat, it was voraciously; when he did drink wine, it was copiously.' *Life*, iv. 72.

<sup>2</sup> He came one day with Becket the bookseller to Dr. Burney's house. 'Becket walked on a little before Garrick, and he [Garrick] was impudent enough to take him off to his face, I was going to say, but to do him justice he did it like a gentle-

man behind his back.' *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 283.

<sup>3</sup> Swift, in 1716, described himself as having been 'always a Whig in politicks.' *Works*, ed. 1803, xvi. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Madan, in 1730, 'submitted to the University of Dublin a scheme for the encouragement of learning by the establishment of premiums, for which he proposed to raise a fund amounting at the lowest to £250 per annum.' In 1732 they were first granted. Some fourteen years later Edmund Burke was awarded a premium. *Dict. Nat. Biog.* xxxv. 296.

sinking into that morbid idiocy which only terminated with his life, and was saving every shilling to found his hospital for lunatics<sup>1</sup>; but his application was refused with so little delicacy, as left in Dr. Madden a rooted dislike to Swift's character, which he communicated to Johnson, whose friendship he gained on the following occasion: Dr. Madden wished to address some person of high rank, in prose or verse; and, desirous of having his composition examined and corrected by some writer of superior talents, had been recommended to Johnson, who was at that time in extreme indigence; and having finished his task, would probably have thought himself well rewarded with a guinea or two, when, to his great surprise, Dr. Madden generously slipped ten guineas into his hand<sup>2</sup>. This made such an impression on Johnson, as led him to adopt every opinion of Dr. Madden, and to resent, as warmly as himself, Swift's rough refusal of the contribution; after which the latter could not decently request any favour from the University of Dublin. (Page 81.)

[ 'I am to mention (writes Boswell, *Life*, iv. 395) that Johnson's conduct, after he came to London and associated with Savage, was not so strictly virtuous in one respect as when he was a younger man. . . . He owned to many of his friends that he

J. W. Stubbs's *Hist. Univ. Dublin*, pp. 198, 200. In 1740 Madan set afoot a premium scheme for the encouragement of inventions in Ireland. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1740, p. 94; *Life*, i. 318. It was in 1745 that he published his *Boulter's Monument*. *Ib.* It was in 1739 that Swift was asked to get Johnson the degree of Master of Arts of Dublin. Percy makes a strange confusion in his 'real cause.'

<sup>1</sup> Swift left the bulk of his property to found a lunatic asylum in Dublin. *Works*, ed. 1803, xxiv. 236. He ended his *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, written fourteen years before his end, by saying:—

'He gave the little wealth he had  
To build a house for fools and mad;  
And showed by one satiric touch  
No nation wanted it so much.'

*Ib.* xi. 255.

<sup>2</sup> 'When Dr. Madden came to London, he submitted that work [*Boulter's Monument*] to my castigation; and I remember I blotted a great many lines, and might have blotted many more, without making the poem worse. However, the Doctor was very thankful, and very generous, for he gave me ten guineas, which was to me at that time a great sum.' *Life*, i. 318. The work was 'A Panegyric Poem' in memory of Archbishop Boulter. See *post*, p. 267.

used

used to take women of the town to taverns and hear them relate their history.]

This seems to have been suggested by Mr. Boswell, to account for Johnson's religious terrors on the approach of death; as if they proceeded from his having been led by Savage to vicious indulgences with the women of the town, in his nocturnal rambles<sup>1</sup>. This, if true, Johnson was not likely to have confessed to Mr. Boswell, and therefore must be received as a pure invention of his own. But if Johnson ever conversed with those unfortunate females, it is believed to have been in order to reclaim them from their dissolute life, by moral and religious impressions; for to one of his friends he once related a conversation of that sort which he had with a young female in the street, and that asking her what she thought she was made for, 'she supposed to please the gentlemen<sup>2</sup>.' His friend intimating his surprise, that he should have had communications with street-walkers, implying a suspicion that they were not of a moral tendency, Johnson expressed the highest indignation that any other motive could ever be suspected. (Page 90.)

The account of the manner in which Johnson compiled his Dictionary, as given by Mr. Boswell, is confused and erroneous<sup>3</sup>; and a moment's reflection will convince every person of judgment could not be correct; for, to write down an alphabetical

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Hawkins, who tells this story (p. 321), says:—'It is too well attested for me to omit it.' Malone says that 'Baretti used sometimes to walk with Johnson through the streets at night, and occasionally entered into conversation with the unfortunate women who frequent them, for the sake of hearing their stories. It was from a history of one of these, which a girl told under a tree in the King's Bench Walk in the Temple to Baretti and Johnson, that he formed the story of Misella

in the *Rambler*' [Nos. 170 and 171]. Prior's *Malone*, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> 'The words, partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them, he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions, and significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the passages with a black-lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced.' *Life*, i. 188. See *ante*, ii. 95.

arrangement of all the words in the English language, and then hunt through the whole compass of English literature for all their different significations, would have taken the whole life of any individual; but Johnson, who, among other peculiarities of his character, excelled most men in contriving the best means to accomplish any end, devised the following mode for completing his Dictionary, as he himself expressly described to the writer of this account. He began his task by devoting his first care to a diligent perusal of all such English writers as were most correct in their language<sup>1</sup>, and under every sentence which he meant to quote, he drew a line, and noted in the margin the first letter of the word under which it was to occur. He then delivered these books to his clerks, who transcribed each sentence on a separate slip of paper, and arranged the same under the word referred to. By these means he collected the several words and their different significations; and when the whole arrangement was alphabetically formed, he gave the definitions of their meanings, and collected their etymologies from Skinner, Junius<sup>2</sup>, and other writers on the subject. In completing his alphabetical arrangement, he, no doubt, would recur to former dictionaries<sup>3</sup>, to see if any words had escaped him; but this, which Mr. Boswell makes the first step in the business, was in reality the last; and it was doubtless to this happy arrangement that Johnson effected in a few years what employed the foreign academies nearly half a century.

Mr. Boswell objects to the title of *Rambler*, which he says was ill-suited to a series of grave and moral discourses, and is translated into Italian *Il Vagabondo*, as also because the same

<sup>1</sup> It was in this work that he acquired a great part of his extraordinary knowledge of books. 'Dr. Adam Smith (writes Boswell) once observed to me that "Johnson knew more books than any man alive."' *Life*, i. 71. 'I never knew a man who studied hard (said Johnson). I conclude, indeed, from the effects, that some men have studied hard, as Bentley and Clarke.' *Id.* 'Tradition

in Cambridge has recorded that Bentley said he thought himself likely to live to fourscore, an age long enough to read everything which was worth reading.' Monk's *Bentley*, ii. 412.

<sup>2</sup> For Francis Junius and Stephen Skinner see *Life*, i. 186.

<sup>3</sup> 'An interleaved copy of Bailey's dictionary in folio he made the repository of the several articles.' Hawkins, p. 175.

title was afterwards given to a licentious magazine<sup>1</sup>. These are curious reasons. But in the first place, Mr. Boswell assumes, that Johnson intended only to write a series of papers on 'grave and moral' subjects; whereas, on the contrary, he meant this periodical paper should be open for the reception of every subject, serious or sprightly, solemn or familiar, moral or amusing; and therefore endeavoured to find a title as general and unconfined as possible<sup>2</sup>. He acknowledged, that 'The Spectator' was the most happily chosen of all others, and 'The Tatler' the next to it; and after long consideration how to fix a third title, equally capacious and suited to his purpose, he suddenly thought upon *The Rambler*, and it would be difficult to find any other that so exactly coincided with the motto he has adopted in the title-page.

'Quo me cunque rapit tempestas deferor hospes'.

(Page 142.)

Johnson's manner of composing has not been rightly understood. He was so extremely short-sighted, from the defect in his eyes, that writing was inconvenient to him; for whenever he wrote, he was obliged to hold the paper close to his face. He, therefore, never composed what we call a foul draft on paper of any thing he published, but used to revolve the subject in his mind, and turn and form every period, till he had brought the whole to the highest correctness and the most perfect

<sup>1</sup> 'Johnson was, I think, not very happy in the choice of his title, *The Rambler*, which certainly is not suited to a series of grave and moral discourses; which the Italians have literally, but ludicrously translated by *Il Vagabondo*; and which has been lately assumed as the denomination of a vehicle of licentious tales, *The Rambler's Magazine*.' *Life*, i. 202. For *Il Vagabondo* see *ib.* iii. 411.

<sup>2</sup> In his last *Rambler* he says:—'I have never complied with temporary curiosity, nor enabled my readers to discuss the topic of the day. . . . They only were expected to

peruse them, whose passions left them leisure for abstracted truth, and whom virtue could please by its naked dignity.'

<sup>3</sup> The motto was,

'Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,

Quo me cunque rapit tempestas deferor hospes.'

Horace, *Epis.* i. 1. 14.

'Sworn to no master, of no sect am I:

As drives the storm, at any door I knock.'

Percy seems to think that Johnson chose his motto first and then cast about for a title to suit it.

arrangement



arrangement<sup>1</sup>. Then his uncommonly retentive memory enabled him to deliver a whole essay, properly finished, whenever it was called for. The writer of this note has often heard him humming and forming periods, in low whispers to himself, when shallow observers thought he was muttering prayers, &c.<sup>2</sup> But Johnson is well known to have represented his own practice, in the following passage, in his *Life of Pope*<sup>3</sup>. 'Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention; and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them.' (Page 149.)

Johnson's invectives against Scotland, in common conversation, were more in pleasantry and sport than real and malignant; for no man was more visited by natives of that country, nor were there any for whom he had a greater esteem<sup>4</sup>. It was to Dr. Grainger<sup>5</sup>, a Scottish physician, that the writer of this note owed his first acquaintance with Johnson, in 1756. (Page 285.)

<sup>1</sup> 'A certain apprehension arising from novelty made him write his first exercise at College twice over; but he never took that trouble with any other composition; and we shall see that his most excellent works were struck off at a heat, with rapid exertion.' *Life*, i. 71.

It is clear that he did not always, as Percy says, 'turn and form every period' before he began to write. Much of his poetry was thus written (*Jb.* i. 192; ii. 15), but not all. Thus he said, 'I allow, you may have pleasure from writing, after it is over, if you have written well; but you don't go willingly to it again. I know when I have been writing verses, I have run my finger down the margin, to see how many I had made, and how few I had to make.' *Jb.* iv. 219. This shows that he was composing at the desk. From his

account of the way his *Ramblers* were written it is clear that he often composed as he wrote. *Jb.* iii. 42, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell apparently is aimed at as one of 'the shallow observers.' He says:—'Talking to himself was one of his singularities ever since I knew him. I was certain that he was frequently uttering pious ejaculations, for fragments of the Lord's Prayer have been distinctly overheard.' *Jb.* i. 483, v. 307. See also *post*, p. 273. Percy must have been offended by Boswell's publication of the 'friendly scheme' mentioned in the *Life*, iii. 276. See *ib.* iii. 278, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, viii. 321.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, ii. 121, 306; *ante*, i. 264, n.

<sup>5</sup> The author of the *Sugar-Cane* (*Life*, ii. 454) practised as a medical man; perhaps he is meant. He knew Percy. *Letters*, ii. 70, n. 3.

This

This summer [1764] Johnson paid a visit to Dr. Percy<sup>1</sup>, at his vicarage house in Easton-Mauduit, near Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire, and spent parts of the months of June, July, and August with him, accompanied by his friend Miss Williams, whom Mrs. Percy found a very agreeable companion<sup>2</sup>. As poor Miss Williams, whose history is so connected with that of Johnson, has not had common justice done her by his biographers<sup>3</sup>, it may be proper to mention, that, so far from being a constant source and disquiet and vexation to him, although she was totally blind for the last thirty years of her life, her mind was so well cultivated, and her conversation so agreeable, that she very much enlivened and diverted his solitary hours; and though there may have happened some slight disagreements between her and Mrs. Desmoulins, which, at the moment, disquieted him<sup>4</sup>, the friendship of Miss Williams contributed very much to his comfort and happiness. For, having been the intimate friend of his wife<sup>5</sup>, who had invited her to his house, she continued to reside with him, and in her he had always a conversible companion; who, whether at his dinners, or at his tea-table, entertained his friends with her sensible conversation: And being extremely clean and neat in her person and habits, she never gave the least disgust by her manner of eating<sup>6</sup>; and

<sup>1</sup> Percy has written this note in the third person.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 486; *Letters*, i. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Macaulay joined these biographers when he describes Johnson as 'turning his house into a place of refuge for a crowd of wretched old creatures who could find no other asylum,' and when he says that Mrs. Williams's 'chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty.' *Essays*, i. 390; *Biography of Johnson, Misc. Writings*, p. 388. See *Life*, i. 232, n. 1, where I show how untrue this statement was. In addition to the passages cited I would cite the following:—'Last month died Miss Williams, who had been to me for thirty years in the

place of a sister; her knowledge was great and her conversation pleasing.' *Letters*, ii. 348. See *ante*, i. 114.

<sup>4</sup> The disagreements were by no means slight. They troubled him while they lasted (*Life*, iii. 461; *Letters*, ii. 107, 122, 128), but Mrs. Desmoulins did not come to live with him till some time after the beginning of 1777, when she occupied the room assigned to Boswell (*Life*, iii. 104, 222), and Miss Williams died in September, 1783 (*ib.* iv. 235).

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* i. 232.

<sup>6</sup> This is an answer to Boswell, who had said that Johnson would 'sometimes incommode many of his friends, by carrying her with him to when

when she made tea for Johnson and his friends, conducted it with so much delicacy, by gently touching the outside of the cup, to feel, by the heat, the tea as it ascended within, that it was rather matter of admiration than of dislike to every attentive observer <sup>1</sup>. (Page 298.)

This most amiable and worthy gentleman [Mr. Thrale] certainly deserved every tribute of gratitude from Johnson and his literary friends, who were always welcome at his hospitable table ; it must therefore give us great concern to see his origin degraded by any of them, in a manner that might be extremely injurious to his elegant and accomplished daughters, if it could not be contradicted ; for his father is represented to have been a common drayman <sup>2</sup> ; whereas he is well known to have been a respectable citizen, who increased a fortune, originally not contemptible, and proved his mind had been always liberal, by giving a superior education to his son. (Page 407.)

Johnson was fond of disputation, and willing to see what could be said on each side of the question, when a subject was argued <sup>3</sup>. At all other times, no man had a more scrupulous regard for truth ; from which, I verily believe, he would not have deviated to save his life <sup>4</sup>. (Page 472.)

their houses, where, from her manner of eating, in consequence of her blindness, she could not but offend the delicacy of persons of nice sensations.' *Life*, iii. 26.

<sup>1</sup> Boswell had not been an attentive observer, for he says : — ' I fancied she put her finger down a certain way till she felt the tea touch it.' *Ib.* ii. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* i. 490. 'The first Independent Church was opened in 1616. In 1632 this flock was pounced upon while privately worshipping in the house of a brewer's clerk, and while eighteen escaped, forty-two were thrown into prison. The site of the edifice used by this Church when it began to worship publicly under the Common-

wealth was afterwards occupied by Thrale's brewery. It was there that the Austrian marshal, Haynau, was mobbed in 1852 for having whipped women in the Hungarian rebellion.' *The Pilgrim Republic*, by John A. Goodwin, Boston, 1888, p. 440.

<sup>3</sup> 'He would begin thus : — " Why, Sir, as to the good or evil of card-playing—" " Now (said Garrick) he is thinking which side he shall take." ' *Life*, iii. 23. See *ante*, ii. 92, where in his praise of a tavern he says : — ' I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight.'

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 225, 297, 458 ; *post*, p. 223.

# SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

ON

## JOHNSON'S CHARACTER<sup>1</sup>

---

[I HAVE been favoured (writes C. R. Leslie) by Miss Gwatkin<sup>2</sup> with a sight of the following paper by Sir Joshua on the character of Johnson, addressed to some mutual friend<sup>3</sup>, perhaps Malone (or Boswell)<sup>4</sup>. Everything Reynolds wrote, like everything he painted, was destined to many alterations and corrections before its appearance in public<sup>5</sup>. I have transcribed the paper exactly, except in the matter of punctuation, and in the introduction, now and then, of a word, between brackets, to complete the sense.]

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FROM thirty years' intimacy with Dr. Johnson<sup>6</sup> I certainly have had the means, if I had equally the ability, of giving you a true and perfect idea of the character and peculiarities of this extraordinary man. The habits of my profession unluckily extend to the consideration of so much only of character as lies on

<sup>1</sup> From *Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds* by C. R. Leslie and Tom Taylor, 1865, ii. 454.

<sup>2</sup> The daughter of R. L. Gwatkin and his wife Theophila Palmer, who was the daughter of Sir Joshua's sister Mary. *Ib.* i. 4, 31; ii. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Burke and Goldsmith fell into the vulgarity of 'mutual friend.' *Life*, iii. 103, *n.* 1; also Sir Walter Scott.

Lockhart's *Scott*, ed. 1839, ii. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Boswell says that Reynolds 'contributed to improve the second edition' of the *Life*, i. 10. He quotes a paper with which he had been favoured by him. *Ib.* i. 144.

<sup>5</sup> Hence the inferiority of his letters to his other writings. LESLIE.

<sup>6</sup> Reynolds returned from Italy in 1752. *Life*, i. 245.

the

the surface, as is expressed in the lineaments of the countenance. An attempt to go deeper, and investigate the peculiar colouring of his mind as distinguished from all other minds, nothing but your earnest desire can excuse. Such as it is, you may make what use of it you please. Of his learning, and so much of his character as is discoverable in his writings and is open to the inspection of every person, nothing need be said.

I shall remark such qualities only as his works cannot convey. And among those the most distinguished was his possessing a mind which was, as I may say, always ready for use<sup>1</sup>. Most general subjects had undoubtedly been already discussed in the course of a studious thinking life. In this respect few men ever came better prepared into whatever company chance might throw him, and the love which he had to society gave him a facility in the practice of applying his knowledge of the matter in hand in which I believe he was never exceeded by any man. It has been frequently observed that he was a singular instance of a man who had so much distinguished himself by his writings that his conversation not only supported his character as an author, but, in the opinion of many, was superior<sup>2</sup>. Those who have lived with the wits of the age know how rarely this happens. I have had the habit of thinking that this quality, as well as others of the same kind, are possessed in consequence of accidental circumstances attending his life. What Dr. Johnson said a few days before his death of his disposition to insanity was no new discovery to those who were intimate with him<sup>3</sup>. The character of Imlac<sup>4</sup> in *Rasselas*, I always considered as a comment on his own conduct, which he himself practised, and

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir Joshua observed to me the extraordinary promptitude with which Johnson flew upon an argument.' *Life*, ii. 365. 'His superiority over other learned men consisted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of using his mind.' *Ib.* iv. 427.

<sup>2</sup> 'Burke (said Johnson) is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general

fame which he has in the world.' *Ib.* iv. 19. It was no doubt the excellence of Johnson's talk that made Burke affirm 'that Boswell's *Life* was a greater monument to Johnson's fame than all his writings put together.' *Life of Mackintosh*, i. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 65; iii. 175; v. 215; *Letters*, i. 39; *ante*, i. 78.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iii. 6.

as it now appears very successfully, since we know he continued to possess his understanding in its full vigour to the last. Solitude to him was horror; nor would he ever trust himself alone but when employed in writing or reading<sup>1</sup>. He has often begged me to go home with him to prevent his being alone in the coach<sup>2</sup>. Any company was better than none; by which he connected himself with many mean persons whose presence he could command. For this purpose he established a Club at a little ale-house in Essex Street, composed of a strange mixture of very learned and very ingenious odd people. Of the former were Dr. Heberden, Mr. Windham, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Paradise. Those of the latter I do not think proper to enumerate<sup>3</sup>. By thus living, by necessity, so much in company, more perhaps than any other studious man whatever, he had acquired by habit, and which habit alone can give, that facility, and we may add docility of mind, by which he was so much distinguished. Another circumstance likewise contributed not a little to the power which he had of expressing himself, which was a rule, which he said he always practised on every occasion, of speaking his best, whether the person to whom he addressed himself was or was not capable of comprehending

<sup>1</sup> 'The great business of his life (he told Reynolds) was to escape from himself; this disposition he considered as the disease of his mind, which nothing cured but company.' *Life*, i. 144; *ante*, i. 219, 231.

<sup>2</sup> To W. G. Hamilton he said:— 'I am very unwilling to be left alone, Sir, and therefore I go with my company down the first pair of stairs, in some hopes that they may, perhaps, return again. I go with you, Sir, as far as the street-door.' *Life*, i. 490.

In a note on King Henry's speech in *Henry V*, Act iv, sc. 5, he says:— 'There is something very striking and solemn in this soliloquy, into which the king breaks immediately as soon as he is left alone. Something like this, on less occasions,

every breast has felt. Reflection and seriousness rush upon the mind upon the separation of a gay company, and especially after forced and unwilling merriment.'

<sup>3</sup> 'It did not suit Sir Joshua to be one of this Club. But when I mention only Mr. Daines Barrington, Dr. Brocklesby, Mr. Murphy, Mr. John Nichols, Mr. Cooke, Mr. Jodrel, Mr. Paradise, Dr. [Bishop] Horsley, Mr. Windham, I shall sufficiently obviate the misrepresentation of it by Sir John Hawkins, as if it had been a low ale-house association, by which Johnson was degraded.' *Life*, iv. 254; *ante*, i. 440. Among 'the very ingenious odd people whom Reynolds did not care to enumerate' was Barry the painter, who had grossly attacked him. *Life*, iv. 436.

him

him<sup>1</sup>. 'If,' says he, 'I am understood, my labour is not lost. If it is above their comprehension, there is some gratification, though it is the admiration of ignorance;' and he said those were the most sincere admirers; and quoted Baxter, who made it a rule never to preach a sermon without saying something which he knew was beyond the comprehension of his audience in order to inspire their admiration<sup>2</sup>. Dr. Johnson, by this continual practice, made that a habit which was at first an exertion; for every person who knew him must have observed that the moment he was left out of the conversation, whether from his deafness or from whatever cause, but a few minutes without speaking or listening, his mind appeared to be preparing itself. He fell into a reverie accompanied with strange antic gestures; but this he never did when his mind was engaged by the conversation. [These were] therefore improperly called by —, as well as by others, convulsions<sup>3</sup>, which imply involuntary contortions; whereas, a word addressed to him, his attention was recovered. Sometimes, indeed, it would be near a minute before he would give an answer, looking as if he laboured to bring his mind to bear on the question.

In arguing he did not trouble himself with much circum-

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 183.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sir Joshua once observed to him that he had talked above the capacity of some people with whom they had been in company together. "No matter, Sir (said Johnson); they consider it as a compliment to be talked to, as if they were wiser than they are. So true is this, Sir, that Baxter made it a rule in every sermon that he preached to say something that was above the capacity of his audience."' *Ib.* iv. 185.

'To talk intentionally in a manner above the comprehension of those whom we address is unquestionable pedantry; but surely complaisance requires that no man should without proof conclude his company incapable of following him to the highest elevation of his fancy, or the utmost

extent of his knowledge.' *The Rambler*, No. 173.

Mr. Francis Darwin, writing of Charles Darwin, says:—'I have often heard him say that he got a kind of satisfaction in reading articles [in *Nature*] which (according to himself) he could not understand. I wish I could reproduce the manner in which he would laugh at himself for it.' *Life of Charles Darwin*, ed. 1887, i. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell in his *Tour to the Hebrides* had called them 'cramps, or convulsive contractions, of the nature of that distemper called *St. Vitus's dance*.' *Life*, v. 18. In the *Life*, i. 144, he inserts Reynolds's contrary opinion. Tyers had called Johnson 'a convulsionary.' See *post*, p. 338.

location, but opposed, directly and abruptly, his antagonist. He fought with all sorts [of] weapons; [with] ludicrous comparisons and similes; [and] if all failed, with rudeness and overbearing. He thought it necessary never to be worsted in argument<sup>1</sup>. He had one virtue which I hold one of the most difficult to practise. After the heat of contest was over, if he had been informed that his antagonist resented his rudeness, he was the first to seek after a reconciliation<sup>2</sup>; and of his virtues the most distinguished was his love of truth<sup>3</sup>.

He sometimes, it must be confessed, covered his ignorance by generals rather than appear ignorant<sup>4</sup>. You will wonder to hear a person who loved him so sincerely speak thus freely of his friend, but, you must recollect I am not writing his panegyrick, but as if upon oath, not only to give the truth but the whole truth.

His pride had no meanness in it; there was nothing little or mean about him.

Truth, whether in great or little matters, he held sacred.

From the violation of truth, he said, in great things your character or your interest was affected, in lesser things your pleasure is equally destroyed. I remember, on his relating some incident, I added something to his relation which I supposed might likewise have happened: 'It would have been a better story,' says he, 'if it had been so; but it was not<sup>5</sup>.' Our friend Dr. Goldsmith was not so scrupulous; but he said he only indulged himself in white lyes, light as feathers, which he threw up in the air, and on whomever they fell, nobody was hurt. 'I wish,' says Dr. Johnson, 'you would take the trouble of moulting your feathers.'

I once inadvertently put him in a situation from which none but a man of perfect integrity could extricate himself. I pointed at some lines in the *Traveller* which I told [him] I was sure he wrote. He hesitated a little; during this hesitation I recollected myself, that as I knew he would not lye I put him in a cleft stick, and should have had but my due if he had given me

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 390.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 218.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 212, 453.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, v. 124, n. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 225; *Life*, ii. 433.



a rough answer; but he only said, 'Sir, I did not write them, but that you may not imagine that I have wrote more than I really have, the utmost I have wrote in that poem, to the best of my recollection, is not more than eighteen lines<sup>1</sup>.' It must be observed there was then an opinion about town that Dr. Johnson wrote the whole poem for his friend, who was then in a manner an unknown writer<sup>2</sup>. This conduct appears to me to be in the highest degree correct and refined. If the Dr.'s conscience would have let him told [*sic*] a lye, the matter would have been soon over.

/ As in his writings not a line can be found which a saint would wish to blot<sup>3</sup>, so in his life he would never suffer the least immorality [or] indecency of conversation, [or any thing] contrary to virtue or piety to proceed without a severe check, which no elevation of rank exempted them from<sup>4</sup>. . . .

Custom, or politeness, or courtly manners has authorised such an Eastern hyperbolical style of compliment, that part of Dr. Johnson's character for rudeness of manners must be put to the account of this scrupulous adherence to truth. His obstinate silence, whilst all the company were in raptures, vying with each other who should pepper highest, was considered as rudeness or ill-nature<sup>5</sup>.

During his last illness, when all hope was at an end, he

<sup>1</sup> There were only nine lines of which he could be sure they were his. *Life*, ii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iii. 252.

<sup>3</sup> 'The highest praise which Thomson has received ought not to be suppressed; it is said by Lord Lyttelton that his works contained

"No line which, dying, he could wish to blot."

*Works*, viii. 379.

Sir Walter Scott said:—"I am drawing near to the close of my career; I am fast shuffling off the stage. I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of the day; and it is a comfort to me to think that . . . I have written nothing which

on my death-bed I should wish blotted.' Lockhart's *Scott*, ed. 1839, x. 196.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iii. 40; iv. 295; *ante*, i. 453.

<sup>5</sup> To Mrs. Thrale, who was too much given to flattery, he wrote:—"If you love me, and surely I hope you do, why should you vitiate my mind with a false opinion of its own merit?" *Letters*, i. 221. 'Think as well and as kindly of me as you can, but do not flatter me. Cool reciprocations of esteem are the great comforts of life; hyperbolical praise only corrupts the tongue of the one and the ear of the other.' *Ib.* ii. 308. See *ante*, ii. 179 n.

appeared

appeared to be quieter and more resigned. His approaching dissolution was always present to his mind. A few days before he died, Mr. Langton and myself only present, he said he had been a great sinner, but he hoped he had given no bad example to his friends; that he had some consolation in reflecting that he had never denied Christ, and repeated the text 'Whoever denies me, &c.<sup>1</sup>' We were both very ready to assure him that we were conscious that we were better and wiser from his life and conversation; and that, so far from denying Christ, he had been, in this age, his great champion<sup>2</sup>.

Sometimes a flash of wit escaped him as if involuntary. He was asked how he liked the new man that was hired to watch by him. 'Instead of watching,' says he, 'he sleeps like a dormouse; and when he helps me to bed he is awkward as a turnspit dog the first time he is put into the wheel<sup>3</sup>.'

The Christian religion was with him such a certain and established truth, that he considered it as a kind of profanation to hold any argument about its truth<sup>4</sup>.

He was not easily imposed upon by professions to honesty and candour; but he appeared to have little suspicion of hypocrisy in religion<sup>5</sup>.

His passions were like those of other men, the difference only lay in his keeping a stricter watch over himself<sup>6</sup>. In petty circumstances this wayward disposition appeared, but in greater things he thought it worth while to summon his recollection and be always on his guard. . . . [To them that loved him not] as

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew x. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Hawkins records on Nov. 29 (*ante*, ii. 127):—'Mr. Langton, who had spent the evening with him, reported that his hopes were increased, and that he was much cheered upon being reminded of the general tendency of his writings and of his example.'

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 411.

<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless he wished to have more 'evidence of the spiritual world.' *Ib.* ii. 150; iii. 298; iv. 298. Boswell, in the beginning of their

acquaintance, led him to talk on the evidences of Christianity. *Ib.* i. 398, 404, 428, 444, 454. See also v. 109, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> 'For neither man nor angel can discern  
Hypocrisy, the only evil that  
walks

Invisible, except to God alone,  
By his permissive will, through  
Heav'n and Earth.'

*Paradise Lost*, iii. 682.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, iv. 396; *ante*, i. 453.

rough as winter; to those who sought his love, as mild as summer<sup>1</sup>—many instances will readily occur to those who knew him intimately, of the guard which he endeavoured always to keep over himself.

The prejudices he had to countries did not extend to individuals. The chief prejudice in which he indulged himself was against Scotland, though he had the most cordial friendship with individuals [of that country<sup>2</sup>]. This he used to vindicate as a duty. In respect to Frenchmen he rather laughed at himself, but it was insurmountable<sup>3</sup>. He considered every foreigner as a fool till they had convinced him of the contrary<sup>4</sup>. Against the Irish he entertained no prejudice, he thought they united themselves very well with us<sup>5</sup>; but the Scotch, when in England, united and made a party by employing only Scotch servants and Scotch tradesmen<sup>6</sup>. He held it right for Englishmen to oppose a party against them.

This reasoning would have more weight if the numbers were equal. A small body in a larger has such great disadvantages that I fear are scarce counterbalanced by whatever little combination

<sup>1</sup> 'Lofty and sour to them that lov'd him not,  
But to those men that sought him sweet as summer.'

*Henry VIII*, Act iv. sc. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 427-30.

<sup>3</sup> 'An eminent foreigner, when he was shewn the British Museum, was very troublesome with many absurd inquiries. "Now there, Sir, (said Johnson,) is the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman. A Frenchman must be always talking, whether he knows anything of the matter or not; an Englishman is content to say nothing when he has nothing to say." *Life*, iv. 14.

'He said, that once, when he had a violent tooth-ach, a Frenchman accosted him thus:—*Ah, Monsieur, vous étudiez trop.*' *Ib.* iv. 15.

In a note on the scene between Catherine and Alice in *Henry V*

(Act iii. sc. 4) he says:—'Throughout the whole scene there may be found French servility and French vanity.' In another note on Cataian in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Act ii. sc. 3) he says:—'To be a foreigner was always in England, and I suppose everywhere else, a reason of dislike.'

<sup>4</sup> 'One evening at old Slaughter's coffee-house, when a number of foreigners were talking loud about little matters, he said, "Does not this confirm old Meynell's observation—*For any thing I see, foreigners are fools.*"' *Life*, iv. 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 427; ii. 49; *Life*, ii. 242.

<sup>6</sup> You are, to be sure, wonderfully free from that nationality,' said Garrick to Boswell; 'but so it happens that you employ the only Scotch shoe-black in London.' *Life*, ii. 326. See also *ib.* ii. 121, 307, n. 3.

they

they can make. A general combination against them would be little short of annihilation.

We are both of Dr. Johnson's school<sup>1</sup>. For my own part, I acknowledge the highest obligations to him. He may be said to have formed my mind, and to have brushed from it a great deal of rubbish. Those very people whom he has brought to think rightly will occasionally criticise the opinions of their master when he nods. But we should always recollect that it is he himself who taught us and enabled us to do it<sup>2</sup>.

The drawback of his character is entertaining prejudices on very slight foundations; giving an opinion, perhaps, first at random, but from its being contradicted he thinks himself obliged always to support [it], or, if he cannot support, still not to acquiesce [in the opposite opinion]. Of this I remember an instance of a defect or forgetfulness in his 'Dictionary.' I asked him how he came not to correct it in the second edition. 'No,' says he, 'they made so much of it that I would not flatter them by altering it<sup>3</sup>!'

From passion, from the prevalence of his disposition for the minute, he was constantly acting contrary to his own reason, to his principles. It was a frequent subject of animadversion with him, how much authors lost of the pleasure and comfort of life by their carrying always about them their own consequence and celebrity<sup>4</sup>. Yet no man in mixed company,—not to his intimates, certainly, for that would be an insupportable slavery,—ever acted with more circumspection to his character than himself. The most light and airy dispute was with him a dispute on the arena<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Post*, p. 359; *Life*, i. 245, n. 3; iii. 369.

<sup>2</sup> 'It is not uncommon for those who have grown wise by the labour of others to add a little of their own and overlook their masters.' *Works*, vii. 470.

<sup>3</sup> His erroneous definitions of *leeward* and *pastern* remain unchanged in the fourth edition, the last corrected by him. *Life*, i. 293, n. 2. In retaining these definitions, if he did not 'make error pernicious by de-

liberately writing it,' he did his best to make it 'permanent.' *Ib.* iv. 429.

<sup>4</sup> 'Milton, in a letter to a learned stranger, by whom he had been visited, with great reason congratulates himself upon the consciousness of being found equal to his own character, and having preserved in a private and familiar interview that reputation which his works had procured him.' *The Rambler*, No. 14.

<sup>5</sup> 'Speaking of Dr. Campbell, he told us, that he one day called on

performances of artists also. It is the thoughts expressed in the works of Michael Angelo, Correggio, Raffaele, Parmegiano, and perhaps some of the old Gothic masters<sup>1</sup>, and not the inventions of Pietro da Cortona, Carlo Marati, Luca Giordano, and others, that I might mention, which we seek after with avidity: from the former we learn to think originally.

May I presume to introduce myself on this occasion, and even to mention, as an instance of the truth of what I have remarked, the very Discourses which I have had the honour of delivering from this place? Whatever merit they have, must be imputed, in a great measure, to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr. Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it certainly would be to the credit of these Discourses, if I could say it with truth, that he contributed even a single sentiment to them<sup>2</sup>; but he qualified my mind to think justly. No man had, like him, the faculty of teaching inferior minds the art of thinking. Perhaps other men might have equal knowledge; but few were so communicative. His great pleasure was to talk to those who looked up to him. It was here he exhibited his wonderful powers. In mixed company, and frequently in company that *ought* to have looked up to him, many, thinking they had a character for learning to support, considered it as beneath them to enlist in the train of his auditors; and to such persons he certainly did not appear to advantage, being often impetuous and overbearing<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Under the rudeness of Gothic essays a skilful painter will find original, rational, and even sublime inventions. The works of Albert Durer, Lucas Van Leyden, the numerous inventions of Tobias Stimmer and Jost Ammon afford a rich mass of genuine materials, which wrought up and polished to elegance will add copiousness to what, perhaps, without such aid could have aspired only to justness and propriety.' Reynolds's Sixth Discourse. *Works*, 1824, i. 137. For *Gothic* see also *ante*, i. 478.

<sup>2</sup> He wrote the Dedication. *Life*, ii. 2, *n.* 1, and *ante*, ii. 29.

<sup>3</sup> 'On Saturday, May 2, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where there was a very large company, and a great deal of conversation; but owing to some circumstance which I cannot now recollect, I have no record of any part of it, except that there were several people there by no means of the Johnsonian school; so that less attention was paid to him than usual, which put him out of humour; and upon some imaginary offence from me he

The desire of shining in conversation was in him, indeed, a predominant passion; and if it must be attributed to vanity, let it at the same time be recollected, that it produced that loquaciousness from which his more intimate friends derived considerable advantage. The observations which he made on poetry, on life, and on every thing about us, I applied to our art; with what success, others must judge. Perhaps an artist in his studies should pursue the same conduct; and, instead of patching up a particular work on the narrow plan of imitation, rather endeavour to acquire the art and power of thinking. On this subject I have often spoken<sup>1</sup>; but it cannot be too often repeated, that the general power of composition may be acquired; and when acquired, the artist may then lawfully take hints from his predecessors. In reality, indeed, it appears to me, that a man must begin by the study of others. Thus Bacon became a great thinker, by entering into and making himself master of the thoughts of other men.

attacked me with such rudeness that I was vexed and angry.' *Life*, iii. 337.

<sup>1</sup> Reynolds's Sixth Discourse is on imitation. In it he has a phrase

which he probably retained from Johnson's talk:—'Some allowance must be made for what is said in the *gaiety of rhetoric*.' Reynolds's *Works*, 1824, i. 118.

## TWO DIALOGUES

BY

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

IN IMITATION OF JOHNSON'S STYLE OF CONVERSATION<sup>1</sup>

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[THE following *jeu d'esprit* was written by Sir Joshua Reynolds to illustrate a remark which he had made, that 'Dr. Johnson

<sup>1</sup> 'These dialogues were printed in 1816 from the MS. of Sir Joshua, by his niece, Lady Thomond: they were not published, but distributed by her ladyship to some friends of Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua. The copy which I have was spontaneously transmitted to me by Mrs. Gwynn, the friend of Goldsmith and of Johnson, whose early beauty is celebrated in the first part of this work (Vol. i. p. 414), and who is still distinguished for her amiable character and high mental accomplishments. Lady Thomond, in the prefatory note, calls this a '*jeu d'esprit*;' but I was informed by the late Sir George Beaumont, who knew all the parties, and to whom Reynolds himself gave a copy of it, that if the words *jeu d'esprit* were to be understood to imply that it was altogether an *invention* of Sir Joshua's, the term would be erroneous. The substance, and many of the expressions, of the dialogues did really occur; Sir

Joshua did little more than collect, as if into *two* conversations, what had been uttered at *many*, and heighten the effect by the juxtaposition of such discordant opinions.'

—CROKER.

Mary Palmer, the daughter of Sir Joshua's sister Mary, inherited the bulk of his property, and married the first Marquis of Thomond. Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 635. Lady Thomond sent a copy of these Dialogues to Hannah More thirty-six years after Johnson's death, who replied:—'I hear the deep-toned and indignant accents of our friend Johnson. I hear the affected periods of Gibbon; the natural, the easy, the friendly, the elegant language, the polished sarcasm, softened with the sweet temper of Sir Joshua.' *Ib.* ii. 259.

Miss Hawkins published the *Dialogues* in her *Memoirs*, i. 109.

Reynolds left Sir George Beaumont by his will Sebastian Bourdon's considered

considered Garrick as his property, and would never suffer any one to praise or abuse him but himself<sup>1</sup>. In the first of these supposed dialogues, Sir Joshua himself, by high encomiums upon Garrick, is represented as drawing down upon him Johnson's censure; in the second, Mr. Gibbon, by taking the opposite side, calls forth his praise<sup>2</sup>.]

JOHNSON AGAINST GARRICK.

*Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

REYNOLDS. Let me alone, I'll bring him out<sup>3</sup>. (*Aside.*) I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson, this morning, on a matter that has puzzled me very much; it is a subject that I dare say has often passed in your thoughts, and though I cannot, I dare say *you* have made up your mind upon it.

JOHNSON. Tilly fally<sup>4</sup>! what is all this preparation, what is all this mighty matter?

REY. Why, it is a very weighty matter. The subject I have been thinking upon is predestination and freewill, two things I cannot reconcile together for the life of me; in my opinion, Dr. Johnson, freewill and foreknowledge cannot be reconciled<sup>5</sup>.

Return of the Ark, now in the National Gallery. Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 636. To him Wordsworth addressed an Epistle, though Beaumont never saw it. Wordsworth's *Works*, ed. 1857, iv. 308.

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir Joshua Reynolds observed, with great truth, that Johnson considered Garrick to be as it were his *property*. He would allow no man either to blame or to praise Garrick in his presence, without contradicting him.' *Life*, iii. 312. See also *ante*, i. 456.

'In my conscience I believe the baggage loves me; for she never speaks well of me herself, nor suffers anybody else to rail at me.' Congreve, *Old Bachelor*, Act i. sc. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 'Gibbon would scarcely have en-

tered into such an argument. He would not have 'trusted himself with Johnson.' *Life*, ii. 366. Miss Burney records his silence when she met him and Burke. Sir Joshua explained it by saying, 'He's terribly afraid you'll snatch at him for a character in your next book.' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 239. Horace Walpole, when the first volume of the *Decline and Fall* appeared, wrote (*Letters*, vi. 311), 'I know Mr. Gibbon a little, never suspected the extent of his talents, for he is perfectly modest, or I want penetration, which I know too.'

<sup>3</sup> For instances of this see *Letters*, ii. 439, and *Life*, iii. 70.

<sup>4</sup> Tillyvally. *Twelfth Night*, Act ii. sc. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell often worried Johnson  
JOHNS.



JOHNS. Sir, it is not of very great importance what your opinion is upon such a question.

REY. But I meant only, Dr. Johnson, to know your opinion.

JOHNS. No, Sir, you meant no such thing; you meant only to show these gentlemen that you are not the man they took you to be, but that you think of high matters sometimes, and that you may have the credit of having it said that you held an argument with Sam Johnson on predestination and freewill<sup>1</sup>; a subject of that magnitude as to have engaged the attention of the world, to have perplexed the wisdom of man for these two thousand years<sup>2</sup>; a subject on which the fallen angels, who *had yet not lost their original brightness*<sup>3</sup>, find themselves *in wandering mazes lost*<sup>4</sup>. That such a subject could be discussed in the levity of convivial conversation, is a degree of absurdity beyond what is easily conceivable<sup>5</sup>.

REY. It is so, as you say, to be sure; I talked once to our friend Garrick upon this subject, but I remember we could make nothing of it.

JOHNS. O noble pair<sup>6</sup>!

REY. Garrick was a clever fellow<sup>7</sup>, Dr. J.; Garrick, take him altogether, was certainly a very great man.

JOHNS. Garrick, Sir, may be a great man in your opinion,

about free will, and got such answers as the following:—'Sir, we *know* our will is free, and *there's* an end on't.' *Life*, ii. 82. 'All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it.' *Ib.* iii. 291. 'But, Sir, as to the doctrine of Necessity, no man believes it.' *Ib.* iv. 329. See also *ib.* ii. 104; v. 117; and *post*, p. 256.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 285.

<sup>2</sup> 'JOHNSON (with solemn vehemence). "Yes, Madam; this is a question [the appearance of ghosts] which after five thousand years is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding.' *Life*, iii. 298.

<sup>3</sup> 'His form had yet not lost  
All her original brightness.'

*Paradise Lost*, i. 591.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* ii. 561.

<sup>5</sup> 'I wonder, Sir, how a gentleman of your piety can introduce this subject in a mixed company.' *Life*, ii. 254.

<sup>6</sup> 'Par nobile fratrum.' HORACE, 2 *Satires*, iii. 243.

<sup>7</sup> When Reynolds applied the epithet *clever* to Garrick, as a justification for discussing free-will with him, Johnson might have replied in the words of his *Dictionary*:—'*Clever* is a low word, scarcely ever used but in burlesque or conversation; and applied to anything a man likes, without a settled meaning.'

as far as I know, but he was not so in mine; little things are great to little men<sup>1</sup>.

REY. I have heard you say, Dr. Johnson——

JOHNS. Sir, you never heard me say that David Garrick was a great man<sup>2</sup>; you may have heard me say that Garrick was a good repeater—of other men's words—words put into his mouth by other men; this makes but a faint approach towards being a great man.

REY. But take Garrick upon the whole, now, in regard to conversation——

JOHNS. Well, Sir, in regard to conversation, I never discovered in the conversation of David Garrick any intellectual energy, any wide grasp of thought, any extensive comprehension of mind, or that he possessed any of those powers to which *great* could, with any degree of propriety, be applied<sup>3</sup>.

REY. But still——

JOHNS. Hold, Sir, I have not done—there are, to be sure, in the laxity of colloquial speech, various kinds of greatness; a man may be a great tobacconist, a man may be a great painter, he may be likewise a great mimic: now you may be the one, and Garrick the other, and yet neither of you be great men.

REY. But, Dr. Johnson——

JOHNS. Hold, Sir, I have often lamented how dangerous it

<sup>1</sup> 'These little things are great to little man.'

Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, l. 42.

<sup>2</sup> 'Nay, Sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things; he repeats and he sings; there is both recitation and music in his performance; the player only recites.' *Life*, iii. 184.

<sup>3</sup> 'Talking of Garrick, Johnson said, "He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation."' *Ib.* i. 398.

'JOHNSON. "Garrick's conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good

things. There is no solid meat in it; there is a want of sentiment in it.'" *Ib.* ii. 464. Boswell wrote on March 18, 1775:—"Mr. Johnson, when enumerating our Club, observed of some of us, that they talked from books,—Langton in particular. "Garrick," he said, "would talk from books, if he talked seriously." "I," said he, "do not talk from books: *you* do not talk from books." This was a compliment to my originality; but I am afraid I have not read books enough to be able to talk from them.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 181.

is to investigate and to discriminate character, to men who have no discriminative powers<sup>1</sup>.

REY. But Garrick, as a companion, I heard you say—no longer ago than last Wednesday, at Mr. Thrale's table——

JOHNS. You tease me, Sir. Whatever you may have heard me say, no longer ago than last Wednesday, at Mr. Thrale's table, I tell you I do not say so now: besides, as I said before, you may not have understood me, you misapprehended me, you may not have heard me.

REY. I am very sure I heard you.

JOHNS. Besides, besides, Sir, besides,—do you not know,—are you so ignorant as not to know, that it is the highest degree of rudeness to quote a man against himself?<sup>2</sup>

REY. But if you differ from yourself, and give one opinion to-day——

JOHNS. Have done, Sir; the company, you see, are tired, as well as myself<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Johnson (said Reynolds) was fond of discrimination, which he could not show without pointing out the bad as well as the good in every character; and as his friends were those whose characters he knew best, they afforded him the best opportunity for showing the acuteness of his judgment.' *Life*, ii. 306.

<sup>2</sup> 'One of the company provoked him greatly by doing what he could least of all bear, which was quoting something of his own writing, against what he then maintained. "What, Sir, (cried the gentleman,) do you say to

'The busy day, the peaceful night,  
Unfelt, uncounted, glided by?'"—

Johnson finding himself thus presented as giving an instance of a man who had lived without uneasiness, was much offended, for he looked upon such a quotation as unfair.

His anger burst out in an unjustifiable retort, insinuating that the gentleman's remark was a sally of ebriety; "Sir, there is one passion I would advise you to command: when you have drunk out that glass, don't drink another.'" *Ib.* iv. 274. The quotation is from the *Lines on Levett*. *Ib.* iv. 138.

<sup>3</sup> 'Johnson could not brook appearing to be worsted in argument, even when he had taken the wrong side, to shew the force and dexterity of his talents. When, therefore, he perceived that his opponent gained ground, he had recourse to some sudden mode of robust sophistry. Once when I was pressing upon him with visible advantage, he stopped me thus: "My dear Boswell, let's have no more of this; you'll make nothing of it. I'd rather have you whistle a Scotch tune.'" *Ib.* iv. 111.

T'OTHER SIDE.

*Dr. Johnson and Mr. Gibbon.*

JOHNSON. No, Sir; Garrick's fame was prodigious, not only in England, but over all Europe<sup>1</sup>. Even in Russia<sup>2</sup> I have been told he was a proverb; when any one had repeated well, he was called a second Garrick.

GIBBON. I think he had full as much reputation as he deserved.

JOHNS. I do not pretend to know, Sir, what your meaning may be, by saying he had as much reputation as he deserved; he deserved much, and he had much.

GIB. Why, surely, Dr. Johnson, his merit was in small things only, he had none of those qualities that make a real great man.

JOHNS. Sir, I as little understand what your meaning may be when you speak of the qualities that make a great man; it is a vague term. Garrick was no common man; a man above the common size of men may surely, without any great impropriety, be called a great man. In my opinion he has very reasonably fulfilled the prophecy which he once reminded me of having made to his mother, when she asked me how little David went on at school<sup>3</sup>, that I should say to her, that he would come to be hanged, or come to be a great man. No, Sir, it is undoubtedly true that the same qualities, united with virtue or with vice, make a hero or a rogue, a great general or a highwayman. Now Garrick, we are sure, was never hanged,

<sup>1</sup> 'Johnson said of Garrick, "Sir, a man who has a nation to admire him every night may well be expected to be somewhat elated."' *Life*, iv. 7. 'His death eclipsed the gaiety of nations.' *Ib.* i. 82.

<sup>2</sup> 'Even in Russia, where, as Mrs. Carter humorously observed, they were just learning to walk upon their hind legs, an account was published of her.' *Memoirs of Mrs. Carter*, i. 212. It was entitled, 'Anecdotes

au Sujet d'une savante Fille en Angleterre; publiées dans le Sot-schinenie, ou Mélanges de Littérature en Russe, pour le mois de Mai, 1759, p. 470.' *Ib.* ii. 417. A translation of *Joseph Andrews* was published in St. Petersburg in 1772. Strangely enough a railway-station is called in Russian *Vauxhall*, after the famous gardens in Chelsea.

<sup>3</sup> Garrick was nineteen when he became Johnson's pupil.

and in regard to his being a great man, you must take the whole man together. It must be considered in how many things Garrick excelled in which every man desires to excel: setting aside his excellence as an actor, in which he is acknowledged to be unrivalled: as a man, as a poet, as a convivial companion<sup>1</sup>, you will find but few his equals, and none his superior. As a man, he was kind, friendly, benevolent, and generous.

GIB. Of Garrick's generosity I never heard; I understood his character to be totally the reverse, and that he was reckoned to have loved money.

JOHNS. That he loved money, nobody will dispute; who does not? but if you mean, by loving money, that he was parsimonious to a fault, Sir, you have been misinformed. To Foote<sup>2</sup>, and such scoundrels, who circulated those reports, to such profligate spendthrifts prudence is meanness, and economy is avarice. That Garrick, in early youth, was brought up in strict habits of economy, I believe, and that they were necessary, I have heard from himself; to suppose that Garrick might inadvertently act from this habit, and be saving in small things, can be no wonder<sup>3</sup>: but let it be remembered at the same time, that if he was frugal by habit, he was liberal from principle<sup>4</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> 'Garrick was a very good man, the cheerfulest man of his age.' *Life*, iii. 387. 'Having expatiated with his usual force and eloquence on his extraordinary eminence as an actor, Johnson concluded: "And after all, Madam, I thought him less to be envied on the stage than at the head of a table."' *Ib.* iv. 243.

<sup>2</sup> 'Foote used to say of Garrick that he walked out with an intention to do a generous action; but, turning the corner of a street, he met with the ghost of a halfpenny, which frightened him.' *Ib.* iii. 264. 'There is a witty satirical story of Foote. He had a small bust of Garrick placed upon his bureau. "You may be surprised (said he) that I allow him to be so near my gold;—but

you will observe he has no hands."' *Ib.* iv. 224.

<sup>3</sup> 'Garrick (said Johnson) was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could.' *Ib.* iii. 70. 'He began the world with a great hunger for money; the son of a half-pay officer, bred in a family whose study was to make four-pence do as much as others made four-pence halfpenny do. But when he got money he was very liberal.' *Ib.* iii. 387.

<sup>4</sup> 'Swift was frugal by inclination, but liberal by principle.' *Works*, viii. 222.

that

that when he acted from reflection, he did what his fortune enabled him to do, and what was expected from such a fortune. I remember no instance of David's parsimony but once, when he stopped Mrs. Woffington from replenishing the tea-pot; it was already, he said, as red as blood; and this instance is doubtful, and happened many years ago<sup>1</sup>. In the latter part of his life I observed no blameable parsimony in David; his table was elegant and even splendid; his house both in town and country, his equipage, and I think all his habits of life, were such as might be expected from a man who had acquired great riches<sup>2</sup>. In regard to his generosity, which you seem to question, I shall only say, there is no man to whom I would apply with more confidence of success, for the loan of two hundred pounds to assist a common friend, than to David, and this too with very little, if any, probability of its being repaid<sup>3</sup>.

GIB. You were going to say something of him as a writer—you don't rate him very high as a poet.

JOHNS. Sir, a man may be a respectable poet without being a Homer, as a man may be a good player without being a Garrick. In the lighter kinds of poetry, in the appendages of the drama, he was, *if not the first, in the very first class*<sup>4</sup>. He had a readiness and facility, a dexterity of mind that appeared extraordinary even to men of experience, and who are not apt to wonder from ignorance. Writing prologues, epilogues, and epigrams, he said he considered as his trade<sup>5</sup>, and he was, what a man should be, always, and at all times, ready at his trade. He required two hours for a prologue<sup>6</sup> or

<sup>1</sup> Reynolds had the anecdote from Johnson, who had been present at the tea party. *Life*, iii. 264, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 'Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player.' *Ib.* iii. 71.

<sup>3</sup> 'Yes, Sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from

ostentatious views.' *Ib.* iii. 70. See also *ib.* iii. 264, n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> 'As a wit, if not first, in the very first line.'

Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

<sup>5</sup> Garrick said:—'I am a little of an epigrammatist myself, you know.' *Life*, iii. 258.

<sup>6</sup> 'Dryden (said Johnson) has written prologues superior to any that David Garrick has written; but  
epilogue

epilogue, and five minutes for an epigram. Once at Burke's table the company proposed a subject, and Garrick finished his epigram within the time; the same experiment was repeated in the garden, and with the same success.

GIB. Garrick had some flippancy of parts, to be sure, and was brisk and lively in company, and by the help of mimicry and story-telling, made himself a pleasant companion; but here the whole world gave the superiority to Foote, and Garrick himself appears to have felt as if his genius was rebuked<sup>1</sup> by the superior powers of Foote. It has been often observed, that Garrick never dared to enter into competition with him, but was content to act an under part to bring Foote out.

JOHNS. That this conduct of Garrick's might be interpreted by the gross minds of Foote and his friends, as if he was afraid to encounter him, I can easily imagine. Of the natural superiority of Garrick over Foote, this conduct is an instance: he disdained entering into competition with such a fellow, and made him the buffoon of the company; or, as you say, brought him out. And what was at last brought out but coarse jests and vulgar merriment, indecency and impiety<sup>2</sup>, a relation of events which, upon the face of them, could never have happened, characters grossly conceived and as coarsely represented? Foote was even no mimic; he went out of himself, it is true, but without going into another man<sup>3</sup>; he was excelled by Garrick

David Garrick has written more good prologues than Dryden has done.' *Life*, ii. 325.

Horace Walpole wrote of Garrick on Oct. 16, 1769 (*Letters*, v. 197):— 'As that man's writings will be preserved by his name, who will believe that he was a tolerable actor. His prologues and epilogues are as bad as his Pindarics and Pantomimes.'

A few months earlier J. Sharp wrote to Garrick from Cambridge:— 'I met Mr. Gray here at dinner last Sunday; he spoke handsomely of your happy knack at epilogues.' *Garrick Corres.* i. 349.

<sup>1</sup> 'Under him  
My Genius is rebuked.'

*Macbeth*, Act iii. sc. 1, l. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson in a letter to Mrs. Thrale said:— 'Murphy ought to write Foote's life, at least to give the world a *Footeana*.' As a marginal note on this Baretti wrote:— 'One half of it had been a string of obscenities.' *Letters*, ii. 55.

<sup>3</sup> 'BOSWELL. "I don't think Foote a good mimic, Sir." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; his imitations are not like. He gives you something different from himself, but not the character which he means to assume. He goes out even

even in this, which is considered as Foote's greatest excellence. Garrick, besides his exact imitation of the voice and gesture of his original, to a degree of refinement of which Foote had no conception, exhibited the mind and mode of thinking of the person imitated. Besides, Garrick confined his powers within the limits of decency; he had a character to preserve, Foote had none<sup>1</sup>. By Foote's buffoonery and broad-faced merriment<sup>2</sup>, private friendship, public decency, and every thing estimable amongst men, were trod under foot. We all know the difference of their reception in the world. No man, however high in rank or literature, but was proud to know Garrick, and was glad to have him at his table<sup>3</sup>; no man ever considered or treated Garrick as a player; he may be said to have stepped out of his own rank into a higher, and by raising himself, he raised the rank of his profession<sup>4</sup>. At a convivial table his

of himself without going into other people.' *Life*, ii. 154. 'Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimic."' *Ib.* iii. 69.

<sup>1</sup> 'Then Foote has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free.' *Ib.* iii. 69. 'Garrick is restrained by some principle, but Foote has the advantage of an unlimited range.' *Ib.* v. 391.

<sup>2</sup> 'Foote told me (writes Boswell) that Johnson said of him:—"For loud, obstreperous, broad-faced mirth I know not his equal."' *Ib.* iii. 70, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 'A gentleman attacked Garrick for being vain. JOHNSON. "No wonder, Sir, that he is vain; a man who is perpetually flattered in every mode that can be conceived. So many bellows have blown the fire, that one wonders he is not by this time become a cinder." BOSWELL. "And such bellows too. Lord Mansfield with his cheeks like to burst:

Lord Chatham like an Æolus. I have read such notes from them to him, as were enough to turn his head."' *Ib.* ii. 227.

Among the pall-bearers at his funeral were the Duke of Devonshire, Earl Spencer, the Earl of Ossory, Lord Camden, and Viscount Palmerston. The service was performed by the Bishop of Rochester. The train of carriages reached from Charing Cross to the Abbey. Murphy's *Garrick*, p. 349.

<sup>4</sup> 'Here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character.' *Life*, iii. 263.

A great change had taken place before Garrick's day. Pope wrote in 1725 of the players in Shakespeare's time:—"They were led into the Buttery by the Steward, not plac'd at the Lord's table, or Lady's toilette; and consequently were entirely depriv'd of those advantages they now enjoy in the familiar conversation of our Nobility, and an intimacy (not to say dearness) with



exhilarating powers were unrivalled; he was lively, entertaining, quick in discerning the ridicule of life, and as ready in representing it; and on graver subjects there were few topics in which he could not bear his part. It is injurious to the character of Garrick to be named in the same breath with Foote<sup>1</sup>. That Foote was admitted sometimes into good company (to do the man what credit I can) I will allow, but then it was merely to play tricks: Foote's merriment was that of a buffoon<sup>2</sup>, and Garrick's that of a gentleman<sup>3</sup>.

GIB. I have been told, on the contrary, that Garrick in company had not the easy manners of a gentleman.

JOHNS. Sir, I don't know what you may have been told, or what your ideas may be, of the manners of a gentleman: Garrick had no vulgarity in his manners; it is true Garrick had not the airiness of a fop, nor did he assume an affected indifference to what was passing; he did not lounge from the table to the window, and from thence to the fire, or, whilst you were

people of the first condition.' Johnson's *Shakespeare*, vol. i. Preface, p. 90.

<sup>1</sup> On Foote's death Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'Did you think he would so soon be gone? Life, says Falstaff, is a shuttle. He was a fine fellow in his way; and the world is really impoverished by his sinking glories.' *Letters*, ii. 55.

<sup>2</sup> 'BOSWELL. "If Betterton and Foote were to walk into this room, you would respect Betterton much more than Foote." JOHNSON. "If Betterton were to walk into this room with Foote, Foote would soon drive him out of it. Foote, Sir, *quatenus* Foote, has powers superior to them all.'" *Life*, iii. 185.

How great an actor Betterton was is shown by a fine paper in the *Tatler* (No. 167) on his funeral in Westminster Abbey. 'From his action,' writes Steele, 'I had received more strong impressions of what is great and noble in human nature

than from the arguments of the most solid philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets I had ever read.' Steele goes on to quote the lines beginning

'To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,'

from the text, I suppose, at that time in common use on the stage. 'The way to dusty death,' for instance, is changed 'to the eternal night.'

Dr. Warton says that 'an old frequenter of the theatre' told him that on Betterton's last performance 'many spectators got into the playhouse by nine o'clock in the morning, and carried with them provisions for the day.' Warton's *Pope's Works*, ed. 1882, vii. 119.

<sup>3</sup> 'JOHNSON. "Garrick's great distinction is his universality. He can represent all modes of life but that of an easy fine-bred gentleman.'" *Life*, v. 126.

addressing

addressing your discourse to him, turn from you and talk to his next neighbour, or give any indication that he was tired of your company<sup>1</sup>; if such manners form your ideas of a fine gentleman, Garrick certainly had them not.

GIB. I mean that Garrick was more overawed by the presence of the great, and more obsequious to rank, than Foote, who considered himself as their equal, and treated them with the same familiarity as they treated each other.

JOHNS. He did so, and what did the fellow get by it? The grossness of his mind prevented him from seeing that this familiarity was merely suffered as they would play with a dog; he got no ground by affecting to call peers by their surnames; the foolish fellow fancied that lowering them was raising himself to their level; this affectation of familiarity with the great, this childish ambition of momentary exaltation obtained by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another, only showed his folly and meanness<sup>2</sup>; he did not see that by encroaching on others' dignity, he puts himself in their power either to be repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension<sup>3</sup>. Garrick, by paying due respect to rank, respected himself; what he gave was returned, and

<sup>1</sup> 'There are (said Johnson) ten genteel women for one genteel man, because they are more restrained. A man without some degree of restraint is insufferable; but we are all less restrained than women. Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in.' *Life*, iii. 53.

<sup>2</sup> 'He again insisted on the duty of maintaining subordination of rank. "Sir, I would no more deprive a nobleman of his respect, than of his money. I consider myself as acting a part in the great system of society, and I do to others as I would have them to do to me. I would behave to a nobleman as I should expect he would behave to me, were I a noble-

man and he Sam. Johnson. . . . There would be a perpetual struggle for precedence were there no fixed invariable rules for the distinction of rank, which creates no jealousy as it is allowed to be accidental.' *ib.* i. 447. 'No one,' wrote Mrs. Piozzi, 'was so careful to maintain the ceremonies of life as Dr. Johnson.' *Ante*, i. 318.

<sup>3</sup> 'A great mind disdains to hold any thing by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity puts himself in his power; he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension.' *Works*, viii. 225.

man's wish, can be no reproach to Garrick; he who says he despises it knows he lies<sup>1</sup>. That Garrick husbanded his fame, the fame which he had justly acquired both at the theatre and at the table, is not denied; but where is the blame, either in the one or the other, of leaving as little as he could to chance? Besides, Sir, consider what you have said; you first deny Garrick's pretensions to fame, and then accuse him of too great an attention to preserve what he never possessed.

GIB. I don't understand——

JOHNS. Sir, I can't help that<sup>2</sup>.

GIB. Well, but Dr. Johnson, you will not vindicate him in his over and above attention to his fame, his inordinate desire to exhibit himself to new men, like a coquette, ever seeking after new conquests, to the total neglect of old friends and admirers;—

'He threw off his friends like a huntsman his pack<sup>3</sup>;

always looking out for new game.

JOHNS. When you quoted the line from Goldsmith, you ought, in fairness, to have given what followed:—

'He knew when he pleased he could whistle them back;'

which implies at least that he possessed a power over other men's minds approaching to fascination; but consider, Sir, what is to be done: here is a man whom every other man desired to know. Garrick could not receive and cultivate all, according to each man's conception of his own value: we are all apt enough to consider ourselves as possessing a right to be excepted from the common crowd; besides, Sir, I do not see why that should

<sup>1</sup> 'When Johnson thought there was intentional falsehood in the relator his expression was, "He lies, and he knows he lies."' *Life*, iv. 49.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sir, I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding.' *Ib.* iv. 313. '*Intelligibilia, non intellectum adfero.*' Preface to Coleridge's *Poems*, ed. 1859, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> 'I must neither find them ears nor mind.' Ben Jonson, quoted in

Swinburne's *Study of Ben Jonson*, p. 175.

'A man who speaks audibly and intelligibly is not to be blamed for not being heard; nobody being bound to find words and ears too.' South's *Sermons*, iii. 229.

<sup>3</sup> 'He cast off his friends as a huntsman his pack,  
For he knew when he pleased  
he could whistle them back.'  
*Retaliation.*

be imputed to him as a crime, which we all so irresistibly feel and practise ; we all make a greater exertion in the presence of new men than old acquaintance ; it is undoubtedly true that Garrick divided his attention among so many, that but little was left to the share of any individual<sup>1</sup> ; like the extension and dissipation of water into dew, there was not quantity united sufficiently to quench any man's thirst ; but this is the inevitable state of things : Garrick, no more than another man, could unite what, in their natures, are incompatible.

GIB. But Garrick not only was excluded by this means from real friendship, but accused of treating those whom he called friends with insincerity and double dealings.

JOHNS. Sir, it is not true ; his character in that respect is misunderstood : Garrick was, to be sure, very ready in promising, but he intended at that time to fulfil his promise ; he intended no deceit ; his politeness or his good-nature, call it which you will, made him unwilling to deny ; he wanted the courage to say *No*, even to unreasonable demands. This was the great error of his life : by raising expectations which he did not, perhaps could not, gratify, he made many enemies ; at the same time it must be remembered, that this error proceeded from the same cause which produced many of his virtues. Friendships from want of temper too suddenly taken up, and too violent to continue, ended as they were like to do, in disappointment ; enmity succeeded disappointment ; his friends became his enemies ; and those having been fostered in his bosom, well knew his sensibility to reproach, and they took care that he should be amply supplied with such bitter potions as they were capable of administering ; their impotent efforts he ought to have despised, but he felt them ; nor did he affect insensibility.

GIB. And that sensibility probably shortened his life.

JOHNS. No, Sir, he died of a disorder of which you or any

<sup>1</sup> 'I mentioned that Mr. Wilkes had attacked Garrick to me, as a man who had no friend. JOHNSON. "I believe he is right, Sir—*ὅς φίλοι, οὐ φίλος*—He had friends, but no friend. Garrick was so diffused, he

had no man to whom he wished to unbosom himself. He found people always ready to applaud him, and that always for the same thing : so he saw life with great uniformity." *Life*, iii. 386.

other man may die<sup>1</sup>, without being killed by too much sensibility.

GIB. But you will allow, however, that this sensibility, those fine feelings, made him the great actor he was.

JOHNS. This is all cant<sup>2</sup>, fit only for kitchen wenches and chambermaids: Garrick's trade was to represent passion, not to feel it. Ask Reynolds whether he felt the distress of Count Ugolino when he drew it<sup>3</sup>.

GIB. But surely he feels the passion at the moment he is representing it.

JOHNS. About as much as Punch feels<sup>4</sup>. That Garrick himself gave into this foppery of feelings I can easily believe; but he knew at the same time that he lied. He might think it right, as far as I know, to have what fools imagined he ought to have; but it is amazing that any one should be so ignorant as to think that an actor will risk his reputation by depending on the feelings that shall be excited in the presence of two hundred people, on the repetition of certain words which he has repeated two hundred times before in what actors call their study<sup>5</sup>. No, Sir, Garrick left nothing to chance; every gesture, every expression of countenance, and variation of voice, was settled in his closet before he set his foot upon the stage<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> He died of a disease of the kidneys. Murphy's *Garrick*, p. 472.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 161 n., 314 n.

<sup>3</sup> Northcote says that either Burke or Goldsmith, seeing a head of a man in Reynolds's picture gallery, 'exclaimed that it struck him as being the precise person, countenance and expression of the Count Ugolino as described by Dante in his *Inferno*.' Reynolds had not had Ugolino in his thoughts when he drew the head. Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 279.

<sup>4</sup> "Punch has no feelings." *Ante*, i. 457.

<sup>5</sup> *Study* in this sense is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

<sup>6</sup> "Are you, Sir, (said Johnson to Kemble) one of those enthusiasts

who believe yourself transformed into the very character you represent?"

Upon Mr. Kemble's answering that he had never felt so strong a persuasion himself; "To be sure not, Sir, (said Johnson;) the thing is impossible. And if Garrick really believed himself to be that monster, Richard the Third, he deserved to be hanged every time he performed it." *Life*, iv. 243. See also *ib.* v. 46. Mrs. Pritchard, who was, said Johnson, 'a very good player' (*Life*, v. 126); 'the surprising versatility of whose talents' Gibbon mentions (*Misc. Works*, i. 155); 'who was celebrated in *Lady Macbeth*, owned that she knew no more of that play than what was written for her by the prompter

prompter.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 354. Goethe speaking of the theatre at Weimar said:—'An actor's whole profession requires continual self-denial, and a continual existence in a foreign mask. . . . If an actor appeared to me of too fiery a nature, I gave him phlegmatic characters; if too calm and tedious, I gave him fiery and hasty characters, that he might thus learn to lay aside himself, and assume foreign individuality.' Eckermann's *Conversations of Goethe*, i. 228-9. For Diderot's opinion, see *Life*, iv. 244, n. 1.

In the *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 158, we have the following instance of the two ways in which Johnson spoke of Garrick:—"They say," cried Mrs. Thrale, "that Garrick was extremely hurt at the coldness of the King's applause, and did not find his reception such as he expected." "He has been so long accustomed," said Mr. Seward, "to the thundering approbation of the Theatre, that a mere '*Very well*,' must necessarily and naturally disappoint him." "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "he should not, in a Royal apartment, expect the hallowing and clamour of the One Shilling Gallery. The King, I doubt not, gave him as much applause, as was rationally his due; and, indeed, great and uncommon as is the merit of Mr. Garrick, no man will be bold enough to assert he has not had his just proportion both of fame and profit. He has long reigned the unequalled favourite of the public; and therefore nobody will mourn his hard fate, if the King and the Royal Family

were not transported into rapture, upon hearing him read *Lethe*. Yet Mr. Garrick will complain to his friends, and his friends will lament the King's want of feeling and taste;—and then Mr. Garrick will kindly *excuse* the King. He will say that His Majesty might be thinking of something else; that the affairs of America might occur to him; or some subject of more importance than *Lethe*; but, though he will say this himself, he will not forgive his friends if they do not contradict"! But, now that I have written this satire, it is but just both to Mr. Garrick and to Dr. Johnson, to tell you what he said of him afterwards, when he discriminated his character with equal candour and humour. "Garrick," he said, "is accused of vanity; but few men would have borne such unremitting prosperity with greater, if with equal moderation. He is accused, too, of avarice; but, were he not, he would be accused of just the contrary; for he now lives rather as a *prince* than an actor; but the frugality he practised, when he first appeared in the world, and which even then was perhaps beyond his necessity, has marked his character ever since; and now, though his table, his equipage, and manner of living are all the most expensive, and equal to those of a nobleman, yet the original stain still blots his name! Though, had he not fixed upon himself the charge of avarice, he would long since have been reproached with luxury, and with living beyond his station in magnificence and splendour."

## RECOLLECTIONS OF DR. JOHNSON

BY MISS REYNOLDS

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[THESE Recollections were published by Mr. Croker from some MSS. in Miss Reynolds's handwriting, communicated to him by the Rev. John Palmer, grandson of Sir Joshua Reynolds's sister Mary, who married John Palmer of Torrington. They have been kindly lent me by their present owner, Lady Colomb of Dronquinna, Kenmare, the Rev. John Palmer's granddaughter. One set is tolerably complete; the other is made up of at least two, and probably three, versions. It was clearly with a view to publication that Miss Reynolds revised and rewrote her Recollections. On one page, where she gives Johnson's poem on Levett, she says:—'I think I may be excused for publishing it, tho' it has already appear'd in print, if only because Dr. Johnson gave it to me with his own hand'. No doubt at the last her courage failed her, as it had failed her earlier in the case of the poems and essays which she had thought of printing (*post*, p. 279), and her Recollections were confined to her desk. It was all in vain that Boswell had tried to get from her the letters which she had received from Johnson. 'I am sorry,' he wrote, 'that her too nice delicacy will not permit them to be published.' (*Life*, i. 486, n. 1).]

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THE first time I was in company with Dr. Johnson I remember

' In this version in the line, she writes, 'No summons shock'd,'  
'No summons mock'd by chill &c.  
delay,'

the

the impression I felt in his favour, on his saying that as he return'd to his lodgings about one or two o'clock in the morning, he often saw poor children asleep on thresholds and stalls, and that he used to put pennies' into their hands to buy them a breakfast.

And at the first interview which was at that lady's house to whom he address'd his galant [*sic*] letter<sup>2</sup> was, as I well remember, the flattering notice he took of a lady present, on her saying that she was inclined to estimate the morality of every person according as they liked or disliked *Clarissa Harlowe*. He was a great admirer of Richardson's works in general, but of *Clarissa* he always spoke with the highest enthusiastic praise. He used to say, that it was the first Book in the world for the knowledge it displays of the human Heart<sup>3</sup>. Yet of the Author I never heard him speak with any degree of cordiality, but rather as if impress'd with some cause of resentment against him<sup>4</sup>; and this has been imputed to something of jealousy, not to say envy, on account of Richardson's having engross'd the attentions and affectionate assiduities of several very ingenious literary ladies, whom he used to call his adopted [*sic*] daughters, and for whom Dr. Johnson had conceived a paternal affection (particularly for two of them, Miss Carter<sup>5</sup> and Miss Mulso<sup>6</sup>, now Mrs. Chapone), previous to their acquaintance with

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Johnson's own expression.' MISS REYNOLDS.

<sup>2</sup> 'At the end of the second vol. of Dr. Johnson's Letters to Mrs. Thrale.' MISS REYNOLDS. 'The lady was Miss Cotterell.' *Letters*, i. 43.

<sup>3</sup> 'Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*.' *Life*, ii. 174. See also *ante*, ii. 190, and *Letters*, i. 21.

<sup>4</sup> At Edinburgh he said of Richardson that 'his perpetual study was to ward off petty inconveniences and procure petty pleasures; that his love of continual superiority was such, that he took care to be always surrounded by women, who listened to him implicitly, and did not venture

to controvert his opinions; and that his desire of distinction was so great, that he used to give large vails to the Speaker Onslow's servants, that they might treat him with respect.' *Life*, v. 395. See also *ib.* p. 396, *n.* 1, and *ante*, i. 273.

<sup>5</sup> Miss Carter was only eight years younger than Johnson, so that the affection was scarcely paternal. For her puddings and her Greek see *ante*, ii. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale:— 'You make verses, and they are read in publick, and I know nothing about them. This very crime, I think, broke the link of amity between Richardson and Miss M—, after a Richardson



Richardson; and it was said, that he thought himself neglected by them on his account.

Johnson set a higher value upon female friendship than, perhaps, most men; which may reasonably be supposed was not a little enhanced [*sic*] by his acquaintance with those Ladies, if it was not originally derived from them. To their society, doubtless, Richardson owed that delicacy of sentiment, that feminine excellence, as I may say, that so peculiarly distinguishes his writings from those of his own sex in general, how high soever they may soar above the other in the more dignified walks of literature, in scientific investigations, and abstruse inquiries.

Dr. Johnson used to repeat, with very apparent delight, some lines of a poem written by one of these ladies<sup>1</sup>:—

Say, Stella, what is Love, whose cruel power  
 Robs virtue of content, and youth of joy?  
 What Nymph or Goddess, in what fatal hour,  
 Produced to light the mischief-making Boy?  
 Some say, by Idleness and Pleasure bred,  
 The smiling babe on beds of roses lay;  
 There with soft-honied dews by Fancy fed,  
 His infant Beauties open'd on the Day<sup>2</sup>.

Dr. Johnson had a [*sic*] uncommonly retentive memory for every thing that appear'd to him worthy of observation. Whatever he met with in reading, particularly poetry, I believe he seldom required a revisal to be able to repeat verbatim<sup>3</sup>. If not literally so, *it was more honour'd in the breach than in the observance*. And this was the case, in some respects, in Shen-

tenderness and confidence of many years.' *Letters*, ii. 141. Miss M— was, no doubt, Miss Mulso. She wrote 'four billets' in the *Rambler*, No. 10. *Life*, i. 203.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Mulso. MISS REYNOLDS.

<sup>2</sup> 'Johnson paid the first of these stanzas the great and undeserved compliment of quoting it in his Dictionary, under the word *Quatrain*.' CROKER.

The stanza as there quoted is somewhat better; it is likely that Johnson improved it.

'Say, Stella, what is love, whose  
 fatal pow'r  
 Robs virtue of content and youth  
 of joy?  
 What nymph or goddess in a luck-  
 less hour  
 Disclos'd to light the mischief-  
 making boy?'

Though Miss Mulso was but twenty-eight when the Dictionary was published, she was already complimented with the title of Mrs. Mulso.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 360; *Life*, i. 39; v. 368.  
 stone's

stone's poem of *The Inn*, which I learnt from hearing Dr. Johnson repeat it; and I was surprised, on seeing it lately among the Author's works for the first time, to find it so different. The alterations are in italics <sup>1</sup>.

To thee, fair Freedom, I retire,  
From flattery, *feasting*<sup>2</sup>, dice and din;  
Now art thou found in *Domes much*<sup>3</sup> higher  
Than the low Cot or humble Inn.

'Tis here with boundless power I reign,  
And every Health that I begin,  
*Brightens* dull Port to *gay* Champagne<sup>4</sup>  
For Freedom crowns it at an Inn.

I fly from pomp, I fly from plate,  
I fly from falsehood's specious grin;  
Freedom I love, and form I hate,  
And chuse my lodgings at an Inn.

Here, Waiter, take my sordid ore,  
Which lacquays else might hope to win;  
It buys what Courts have not in store,  
It buys me freedom at an Inn.

*And once again I shape my way,  
Through rain, through shine, through thick and thin,  
Secure to meet at close of Day  
A kind reception at an Inn*<sup>5</sup>.

*You who have travell'd* Life's dull Round,  
*Who through* its various Tours have been,  
May sigh to think how oft you've found  
The warmest welcome at an Inn<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson for the most part quoted the poem as it was originally published in Dodsley's *Collection*, 1758, v. 51. Miss Reynolds saw it as it was given in Shenstone's *Works*, 1791, i. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Cards and dice.

<sup>3</sup> In mansions higher.

<sup>4</sup> In Shenstone, 'Converts dull port to bright champagne.'

<sup>5</sup> 'Spoken by Dr. Johnson extemporary.' MISS REYNOLDS. This verse with slight differences is in the original poem.

<sup>6</sup> "No, Sir; there is nothing

which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn." He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone's lines:—

"Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,

Where'er his stages may have been,

May sigh to think he still has found

The warmest welcome at an inn." *Life*, ii. 452. See *ib. n.* for the stanza as it originally stood.

'March 3, 1831. "Those are Dr.

Dr. Johnson commonly read with amazing rapidity, glancing his eye from the top to the bottom of the page in an instant<sup>1</sup>. If he made any pause, it was a compliment to the work; and, after seesawing over it<sup>2</sup> a few minutes, generally repeated the passage, especially if it was poetry. One day, on taking up Pope's *Essay on Man*, a particular passage seem'd more than ordinarily to engage his attention; and so much, indeed, that, contrary to his usual custom, after he had left the Book and the place where he was sitting, he return'd to revise it, turning over the pages with anxiety to find it, and then repeated—

Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair  
List under Reason, and deserve her care;  
Those that, imparted, court a nobler aim,  
Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name<sup>3</sup>.

His task, probably, was the whole paragraph, but these lines only were audible.

He seemed much to delight in reciting verses, particularly from Pope. Among the many I have had the pleasure of hearing him recite, the conclusion of the *Dunciad* and his *Epistle to Jervas*, seemed to claim his highest admiration:—

Led by some rule that guides, but not constrains,  
And finish'd more through happiness than pains<sup>4</sup>,

he used to remark, was a union that constituted the ultimate degree of excellence in the fine arts.

Two lines from Pope's *Universal Prayer* I have heard him quote, in very serious conversation, as his theological creed:—

And binding Nature fast in fate,  
Left free the human will<sup>5</sup>.

Mr. Baretti used to remark, with a smile, that Dr. Johnson

most fortunate (said Goethe) who live in tents, or who, like some Englishmen, are always going from one city and one inn to another, and find everywhere a good table ready." Eckermann's *Conversations of Goethe*, 1850, ii. 360.

<sup>1</sup> 'He had a peculiar facility in

seizing at once what was valuable in any book without submitting to the labour of perusing it from beginning to end.' *Life*, i. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 142.

<sup>3</sup> *Essay on Man*, ii. 97.

<sup>4</sup> *Epistle to Mr. Jervas*, l. 67.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, ii. 233.

always

always talked his best to the ladies. But, indeed, that was his usual custom to every person who would furnish him with a subject worthy of his discussion<sup>1</sup>; for, what was very singular in him, he would rarely, if ever, begin any subject himself, but would sit silent till something was particularly addressed to him<sup>2</sup>, and if that happened to lead to any scientific or moral inquiry, his benevolence, I believe, more immediately prompted him to expatiate on it for the edification of the ignorant than from any other motive whatever.

One day, on a lady's telling him that she had read Parnell's *Hermit* with dissatisfaction, for she could not help thinking that thieves and murderers, who were such immediate ministers from heaven of good to man, did not deserve such punishments as our laws inflict<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Johnson made such an eloquent oration, and with such energy, as indeed afforded a most striking instance of the truth of Baretti's observation, but of which, to my great regret, I can give no corroborating proof, my memory furnishing me with nothing more than barely the general tendency of his arguments, which were to prove, that though it might be said that wicked men, as well as the good, were ministers of God, because in the moral sphere the good we enjoy and the evil we suffer are administered to us by man, yet, as infinite goodness could not inspire or influence man to act wickedly, but, on the contrary, it was his divine property to produce good out of evil, and as man was endowed with free-will to act, or refrain from

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of his talk 'he told Sir Joshua that he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion.' *Life*, i. 204. See *ib.* iii. 193, *n.* 3, for 'his phrase, "they talked their best."'

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 289.

<sup>3</sup> In Parnell's poem an angel, disguised as a youth, in the hermit's sight steals a golden goblet from a generous but too lavish host; gives it to a miser; strangles a virtuous man's only child, and drowns a servant who is guiding them across a river. He explains how Providence

... 'through all depends

On using second means to work his ends,'

and shows that out of each one of these 'strange events' good came. The lady, applying this pious fable, said that thieves and murderers who are but 'second means' are hardly dealt with when they were sent to the gallows. She ought, after seeing them hanged at Tyburn, to have stifled her doubts, and to have imitated the hermit, who

... 'gladly turning sought his ancient place,

And pass'd a life of piety and peace.'

acting

acting wickedly, with knowledge of good and evil, with conscience to admonish and to direct him to chuse the one and reject the other, he was, therefore, as criminal in the sight of God and of man, and as deserving punishment for his evil deeds, as if no good had resulted from them<sup>1</sup>.

There was nothing Dr. Johnson used to say of which he was so certain as of the freedom of his will, and no man, I believe, was ever more attentive to preserve its rectitude, its acquired rectitude, I suppose I should say, in conformity with his religious tenets respecting original sin, and with his more general and common assertions that Man was by Nature much more inclined to evil than to good<sup>2</sup>.

And another Axiom of his of the same gloomy tendency was that the pain and miseries of human life far outweighed its happiness and good<sup>3</sup>. But on a lady's asking him whether he would not permit common ease to be put into the scale of happiness and good, he seem'd embarrassed (very unusual with him) and answering in the affirmative, instantly rose from his seat to avoid the inference.

But, indeed, much may be said in Dr. Johnson's justification, supposing these notions should not meet with universal approbation, having, it is probable, imbibed them in the early part of his life, when under the pressure of adverse fortune, and in every period of it under the still heavier pressure and more adverse

<sup>1</sup> 'JOHNSON. "Moral evil is occasioned by free will, which implies choice between good and evil. With all the evil that there is, there is no man but would rather be a free agent, than a mere machine without the evil; and what is best for each individual, must be best for the whole. If a man would rather be the machine, I cannot argue with him. He is a different being from me."' *Life*, v. 117. See also *ib.* v. 366, and *ante*, ii. 233.

<sup>2</sup> 'This may appear rather inconsistent with his notions of free-will, but I will write the truth and nothing but the truth.' MISS REYNOLDS.

See *ante*, i. 268 n., where Lady M'Leod starting at what Johnson maintained said, "This is worse than Swift."

<sup>3</sup> 'From the subject of death we passed to discourse of life, whether it was upon the whole more happy or miserable. Johnson was decidedly for the balance of misery,' *Life*, iv. 300. But see *post*, p. 360, where 'he asserted that no man could pronounce he did not feel more pleasure than misery.'

Swift wrote:—"The miseries of man are all beaten out on his own anvil." Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xv. 11.

influence

influence of Nature herself. For I have often heard him lament that he inherited from his Father a morbid disposition both of Body and Mind<sup>1</sup>. An oppressive melancholy which robb'd him of the common enjoyment of life<sup>2</sup>.

Indeed, he seemed to struggle almost incessantly with some mental evil, and often, by the expression of his countenance and the motion of his lips, appeared to be offering up some ejaculation to Heaven to remove it. But in Lent, or near the approach of any great festival, he would generally retire from the company to a corner of the room, but most commonly behind a window-curtain, to pray, and with such energy, and in so loud a whisper, that every word was heard distinctly, particularly the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, with which he constantly concluded his devotions. Sometimes some words would emphatically escape him in his usual tone of voice<sup>3</sup>.

At these holy seasons he usually secluded himself more from society than at other times, at least from general and mixed society, and on a gentleman's sending him an invitation to dinner on Easter-eve he was highly offended, and expressed himself so in his answer<sup>4</sup>.

On every occasion that had the least tendency to depreciate Religion or morality, he totally disregarded all forms or rules of good-breeding, as utterly unworthy of the slightest consideration. But it must be confess'd, that he sometimes suffered this noble principle to transgress its due bounds, and to degenerate into prejudices unworthy of his character, extending even to those who were anywise connected with the person who had offended him.

One day, the Brother of a gentleman<sup>5</sup> for whom Dr. Johnson

<sup>1</sup> 'I inherited (said he) a vile melancholy from my father, which has made me mad all my life, at least not sober.' *Life*, v. 215; *ante*, i. 148.

<sup>2</sup> This last paragraph was originally written 'terrifying melancholy, which he was sometimes apprehensive bordered on insanity.'

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 439; *Life*, i. 483.

<sup>4</sup> With the Rev. Dr. Taylor, who invited him to dinner on the last day of Lent, he did not show him-

self offended. *Letters*, i. 188. There is nothing to show that he kept any part of Lent but Passion Week, and even that he did not always keep strictly. *Ante*, i. 82. See *Life*, iv. 89, for 'the admirable sophistry' of his defence for twice dining at a Bishop's in that week.

<sup>5</sup> The two men were Israel and John Wilkes. Israel Wilkes settled in New York. Almon's *Memoirs of John Wilkes*, i. 3.

had conceived some disgust, (chiefly I believe for his political principles) happening to meet him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's (Mr. Reynolds then) in company with some gentlemen and ladies of very distinguish'd characters (I remember Garrick was one, by a remarkable expression of his to a Lady present, that indicated very uneasy apprehensions that the attention of the ladies to him would provoke Johnson to say something rude to him). As this gentleman was giving his opinion on the subject of their discourse, Mr. Johnson stop'd him with 'pray, Sir, what you are going to say, let it be better worth the hearing than what you have already said.' Which seem'd to give a shock, and to spread a gloom over the whole Party, particularly because this gentleman was of a most amiable character, a man of refined Taste, and a scholar, and what Mr. Johnson little suspected, a very loyal subject.

He afterwards told the Lady of the House<sup>1</sup>, that he was very sorry that he should have snubbed W. as he did, because his wife was present. 'Yes, Sir; and for many reasons.' 'No, it is only because his wife was present that I am sorry.'

But this was mild treatment in comparison of what a gentleman<sup>2</sup> met with from him one day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, a barrister at law and a man of fashion, who, on discoursing with Mr. Johnson on the laws and government of different nations, I remember particularly those of Venice, on being inadvertently prompted to speak of them in terms of high approbation: 'Yes, Sir,' says Johnson, 'all Republican Rascals think as you do<sup>3</sup>.' How the conversation ended I have forgot, it was so many years ago; I believe he never made any apology for the insult either to the gentleman or any other person; luckily there were but two others present.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Reynolds.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eliot. MISS REYNOLDS.

<sup>3</sup> Northcote, who had the anecdote from Miss Reynolds, describes 'the young gentleman' as 'humbly making his inquiries to gain all possible information from the profound knowledge of Dr. Johnson, when her attention was suddenly

attracted by the Doctor exclaiming in a very loud and peremptory tone of voice, "Yes, Sir, &c." Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 23.

To his friend Windham Johnson said, 'with a pleasant smile, "Don't be afraid, Sir, you will soon make a very pretty rascal."' *Life*, iv. 200.

Of latter years he grew much more companionable, and I have heard him say, that he knew himself to be so. 'In my younger days,' he would say, 'it is true I was much inclined to treat mankind with asperity and contempt; but I found it answered no good end. I thought it wiser and better to take the world as it goes. Besides, as I have advanced in life I have had more reason to be satisfied with it. Mankind have treated me with more kindness, and of course I have more kindness for them'.<sup>1</sup>

In the latter part of his life, indeed, his circumstances were very different from what they were in the beginning. Before he had the Pension, he literally drest like a Beggar; and from what I have been told, literally lived as such<sup>2</sup>; at least respecting common conveniences in his apartments, wanting even a chair to sit on<sup>3</sup>, particularly in his study, where a gentleman who frequently visited him whilst writing his *Idlers* always found him at his Desk, sitting on one with three legs; and on rising from it, he remark'd that Mr. Johnson never forgot its defect, but would either hold it in his hand or place it with great composure against some support, taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor. How he sat, whether on the window-seat, on a chair, or on a pile of Folios, or how he sat, I do not remember to have heard<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'I never have sought the world; the world was not to seek me. It is rather wonderful that so much has been done for me.' *Life*, iv. 172. 'The world is not so unjust or unkind as it is peevishly represented.' *Letters*, ii. 215. See also *ante*, ii. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Even for some time after he received his pension 'his apartment and furniture and morning dress were sufficiently uncouth.' *Life*, i. 396. See also *ante*, ii. 141, for his decent drawing-room at a later period. How unlike he was in this to Swift, who 'seems to have wasted life in discontent by the rage of neglected pride and the languishment of unsatisfied desire. He is querulous and fastidious, arrogant and malignant: he scarcely speaks of himself

but with indignant lamentations.' *Works*, viii. 225.

<sup>3</sup> In a note in the *Life*, i. 328, I say, 'there can be little question that she is describing the same room [as that described by Mr. Burney in Gough Square]—a room in a house in which Miss Williams was lodged, and most likely Mr. Levet.' I may be mistaken; for when he was writing the *Idler* he was living not only in Gough Square, but also in Staple Inn and Gray's Inn, and perhaps in Inner Temple Lane. In none of these places did Miss Williams lodge. See *Life*, i. 350, n. 3, and *ante*, ii. 116. It is absurd to suppose that he had no chairs in his sitting-room.

<sup>4</sup> 'After dinner, Mr. Johnson proposed to Mr. Burney to go up with



It was remarkable in Dr. Johnson that no external circumstances ever prompted him to make any apology, or to seem even sensible of their existence. Whether this was the effect of Philosophic pride, or of some partial notion respecting high breeding is doubtful <sup>1</sup>.

It is very certain that he piqued himself much upon his knowledge of the rules of true politeness, and particularly on his most punctilious observances of them towards the ladies. A remarkable instance of this was his never suffering any lady to walk from his house to her carriage, through Bolt Court, unattended by himself to hand her into it (at least I have reason to suppose it to be his general custom, from his constant performance of it to those with whom he was the most intimately acquainted); and if any obstacle prevented it from driving off, there he would stand by the door of it, and gather a mob around him. Indeed they would begin to gather the moment he appear'd handing the lady down the steps into Fleet Street. But to describe his appearance, his important air (that indeed cannot be described) but his morning Habilliments, from head to foot, would excite the utmost astonishment in my reader, how a man in his senses could think of stepping [*sic*] outside his door in them, or even to be seen at home in them. Sometimes he exhibited himself at the distance of eight or ten doors distant from Bolt Court, to get at the carriage, to the no small diversion of the populace <sup>2</sup>.

And I am certain to all who love laughing a description of his dress from head to foot would be highly acceptable, and in general, I believe, be thought the most curious part of my Book. But I forbear, merely out of respect to his memory, to give the

him into his garret, which being accepted, he there found about five or six Greek folios, a deal writing-desk, and a chair and a half. Johnson giving to his guest the entire seat, tottered himself on one with only three legs and one arm.' *Life*, i. 328.

<sup>1</sup> 'Mrs. Adams said "she was ashamed to be seen in such a pickle, and that her house was in such a litter; but that if she had expected such an honour from her Ladyship,

she should have found her in a better manner." The parson made no apologies, though he was in his half-cassock, and a flannel night-cap. He said they were heartily welcome to his poor cottage.' *Joseph Andrews*, Bk. iv. ch. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See *Life*, ii. 405, for Beauclerk's account of Johnson's 'doing the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality,' and *ante*, ii. 180.

slightest

slightest intimation of it. For having written a minute description of his Figure, from his wig to his slippers, a thought occurred that it might probably excite some person to delineate it, and I might have the mortification of seeing it hung up at a Print-shop as the greatest curiosity ever exhibited.

His best dress was, at that time, so very mean, that one afternoon as he was following some ladies up stairs, on a visit to a lady of fashion<sup>1</sup>, the Housemaid, not knowing him, suddenly seized him by the shoulder, and exclaimed, 'Where are you going?' striving at the same time to drag him back; but a gentleman who was a few steps behind prevented her from doing or saying more, and Mr. Johnson growled all the way up stairs, as well he might. He seemed much chagrined and apparently disposed to revenge the insult of the maid upon the mistress. Unluckily, whilst in this humour, a lady of high rank<sup>2</sup> happening to call on Miss Cotterel, he was much offended with her for not introducing him to her Ladyship, at least not in the manner he liked, and still more for her seeming to shew more attention to this Lady than to him. After sitting some time silent, meditating how to *down*<sup>3</sup> Miss C., he address'd himself to Mr. Reynolds, who sat next him, and, after a few introductory words, with a loud voice said, 'I wonder which of us two could get most money by his trade in one week, were we to work hard at it from morning till night.' I don't remember the answer; but I know that the lady, rising soon after, went away without knowing what trade they were of. She might probably suspect Mr. Johnson to be a poor author by his dress, and because neither a Porter, a Chairman, or a blacksmith, Trades much more suitable to his apparent abilities, were not quite so suitable to the place she saw him in. This incident Dr. Johnson used to mention with great glee—how he had *downed* Miss C., though at the same time he professed a great friendship and esteem for that lady.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Cotterell. *Life*, i. 246. See *ib. n. 2* for Northcote's version of this story.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Fitzroy. MISS REYNOLDS. According to the account Sir Joshua gave to Boswell there were two ladies of high rank, one of whom was the

Duchess of Argyre.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson talking of Robertson said:—'I *downed* him with the King of Prussia.' *Ib.* iii. 335. He wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'Long live Mrs. G—that downs my mistress.' *Letters*, ii. 73. See also *ante*, i. 169.

It is certain that, for such kind of mortifications, he never express'd any concern; but on other occasions he has shewn the most amiable sorrow for the offence he has given<sup>1</sup>, particularly if it seemed to involve the slightest disrespect to the church or to its ministers<sup>2</sup>.

I shall never forget with what regret he spoke of the rude reply he made to a Rev<sup>d</sup> Divine, a Dignitary of the Church<sup>3</sup>, on his saying that men never improved after the age of forty-five<sup>4</sup>. 'That is not true, Sir,' said Johnson. 'You, who perhaps are forty-eight, may still improve if you will try; I wish you would set about it; and I am afraid,' he added, 'there is great room for it<sup>5</sup>;' and this was said in rather a large Party of gentlemen

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, i. 453, where Murphy says that 'when the fray was over Johnson generally softened into repentance.' He wrote to Dr. Taylor in 1756:—'When I am musing alone, I feel a pang for every moment that any human being has by my peevishness or obstinacy spent in uneasiness.' *Letters*, i. 72. More than twenty years later he said in Miss Burney's hearing:—'I am always sorry when I make bitter speeches, and I never do it but when I am insufferably vexed.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Yet when some clergymen in his company 'thought that they should appear to advantage by assuming the lax jollity of *men of the world*,' he said, 'by no means in a whisper, "This merriment of parsons is mighty offensive."' *Life*, iv. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry; afterwards Bishop of Killaloe. *Ib.* iii. 84; iv. 115. He is 'the good Dean' of Goldsmith's *Retaliation*,

'Who mix'd reason with pleasure and wisdom with mirth.'

<sup>4</sup> 'Of this assertion (writes Miss Edgeworth) my father always doubted the truth, and he opposed the principle, as injurious to the cause of

knowledge and virtue, and tending to lessen the energy and happiness of a large portion of human existence.' *Memoirs of R. L. Edgeworth*, ed. 1844, p. 476.

Swift seems to refer to this belief when he makes the spot in the forehead of every Struldbrug change from time to time till he became five and forty, when 'it never admitted any further alteration.' *Voyage to Laputa*, ch. x.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell recorded in his notebook:—'The Dean of Derry, Dr. Barnard, was maintaining in 177-, that a man never improves after five-and-forty. Johnson very justly took the opposite side. "Why should not a man improve then," said he, "if he has the means of improvement?" The Dean persisted in his error. Johnson angrily said, "I do not say but there are some exceptions; pray, Sir, how old are you?" The Dean was much hurt; came over it again and again at the time, and afterwards wrote the verses which ironically introduces [*sic*] Johnson's *politeness*. But the Dean told me at the dinner of the Royal Academicians, 23 April, 1776, that he had a very great re-  
and

and ladies at dinner. Soon after the ladies withdrew from the table, Dr. Johnson follow'd them, and, sitting down by the Lady of the House<sup>1</sup>, he said, 'I am very sorry for having spoken so rudely to the —.' 'You very well may, Sir.' 'Yes,' he said, 'it was highly improper to speak in that style to a minister of the Gospel<sup>2</sup>, and I am the more hurt on reflecting with what mild dignity he received it.' When the — came up into the Drawing-Room, Dr. Johnson immediately rose from his seat, and made him sit on the sophy [*sic*] by him, and with such a beseeching look for pardon, and with such fond gestures—literally smoothing down his arms and his knees—tokens of penitence, which were so graciously received by the — as to make Dr. Johnson very happy, and not a little added to the esteem and respect he had previously entertained for his character<sup>3</sup>.

The next morning the — called on Sir Joshua Reynolds

spect for Johnson. "I love him," said he, "but he does not love me," and he complained of his rough, harsh manners, saying that when he smiled he showed the teeth at the corner of his mouth, like a dog that is going to bite. He said, "Johnson is right ninety-nine times out of a hundred; I think with him." "But you do not feel with him," said I. "No," said the Dean. "In short, he is not a gentleman." The Dean told me he thought of answering Gibbon, and would be glad to talk with Johnson of it. When I came to Bath Johnson said the Dean was mistaken. He loved him very well, though he disapproved of his being out of place, by living so much among wits, and being member of a midnight club. (That was ours.) He was pleased with his design of answering Gibbon, and said he would be glad to talk with him.' *Morrison Autographs*, 2nd series, i. 371.

The 'midnight club' was the Literary Club. Barnard joined it in

December, 1775. I do not think he answered Gibbon.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Reynolds, if, as Richard Burke says, the scene took place in Sir Joshua's house. *Burke Corres.* i. 403.

<sup>2</sup> 'I asked Dr. Johnson if he did not think the Dean of Derry a very agreeable man, to which he made no answer; and on my repeating my question, "Child," said he, "I will not speak anything in favour of a Sabbath-breaker, to please you, nor any one else.' H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 394.

Bishop Barnard (says Bentham) was 'an unbeliever. I met him at Owen Cambridge's, who had a house of which he was very proud near Pope's, at Twickenham. The Bishop was much among the aristocracy—a man of the world and a clever man.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 285.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson said of him:—'No man ever paid more attention to another than he has done to me.' *Life*, iv. 115.

with

with the following verses<sup>1</sup>, which I should not have taken the liberty to insert, had I not known that they had already appear'd in Print :—

I lately thought no man alive  
 Could ere improve past forty-five,  
     And ventured to assert it.  
 The observation was not new,  
 But seem'd to me so just and true  
     That none could controvert it.

'No, Sir,' says Johnson, 'tis not so,  
 'Tis your mistake, and I can show  
     An instance, if you doubt it.  
 You, who perhaps are forty-eight,  
 May still improve, 'tis not too late :  
     I wish you'd set about it.'

Encouraged thus to mend my faults,  
 I turned his counsel [*sic*] in my thoughts  
     Which way I could apply it ;  
 Genius I knew was past my reach,  
 For who can learn what none can teach ?  
     And wit—I could not buy it.

Then come, my friends, and try your skill ;  
 You may improve me if you will,  
     (My Books are at a Distance) ;  
 With you I'll live and learn, and then  
 Instead of books I shall read men,  
     So lend me your assistance.

Dear knight of Plympton<sup>2</sup> teach me how  
 To suffer with unclouded Brow  
     And smile serene as thine,  
 The jest uncouth and truth severe ;  
 Like thee to turn my deafest ear,  
     And calmly drink my wine.

Thou say'st not only skill is gain'd,  
 But genius, too, may be attain'd,  
     By studious application<sup>3</sup> ;  
 Thy temper mild, thy genius fine,  
 I'll study till I make them mine  
     By constant meditation.

<sup>1</sup> See *Life*, iv. 431, for various readings in these lines.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was

born at Plympton.

<sup>3</sup> See *ante*, i. 314 n., and *Life*, ii. 437, n. 2.

Thy art of pleasing teach me, Garrick,  
 Thou who reverest [reversest] odes Pindaric,  
 A second time read o'er<sup>1</sup>;  
 Oh! could we read thee backwards too,  
 Last thirty years thou shouldst review,  
 And charm us thirty more.

If I have thoughts and can't express 'em,  
 Gibbons [*sic*] shall teach me how to dress 'em  
 In terms select and terse;  
 Jones teach me modesty and Greek<sup>2</sup>;  
 Smith, how to think<sup>3</sup>; Burke, how to speak;  
 And Beauclerk to converse<sup>4</sup>.

Let Johnson teach me how to place  
 In fairest light each borrow'd Grace  
 From him I'll learn to write:  
 Copy his free and easy style,  
 And from the roughness of his file  
 Grow, like himself, Polite.

Dr. Johnson's rude repulse given to a gentleman who ask'd his leave to introduce the Abbé Raynal<sup>5</sup> to him, is I believe too well known to need a repetition. Something similar to that was his answer to a gentleman at the literary club, who, on presenting his Friend, said, 'This, Sir, is Mr. V——y<sup>6</sup>.' 'I see him,' said Dr. Johnson, and immediately turn'd away.

His reply to Dr. Grainger, who was reading his manuscript Poem to him of the sugar-cane, will probably be thought more excusable. When he came to the line, 'Say, shall I sing of Rats?' 'No,' cry'd Dr. Johnson with great vehemency. This

<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Cumberland has written an *Ode*, as he modestly calls it, in praise of Gray's *Odes*. . . . Garrick read it the other night at Mr. Beauclerk's, who comprehended so little what it was about, that he desired Garrick to read it backwards, and try if it would not be equally good; he did, and it was.' Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Jones, who dying at the age of forty-seven had 'studied eight languages critically, eight less perfectly, but all intelligible with a dictionary, and twelve least perfectly, but all attainable.' Teign-

mouth's *Life of Sir W. Jones*, ed. 1815, p. 465.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Smith. For his talk see *Life*, iv. 24, n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 273, 469.

All the men mentioned in these verses, as well as Barnard, were members of the Literary Club.

<sup>5</sup> See *ante*, i. 211.

<sup>6</sup> 'When Mr. Vesey was proposed as a member of the Literary Club Mr. Burke began by saying that he was a man of gentle manners. "Sir," said Johnson, "you need say no more. When you have said a man he

he related to me himself, laughing heartily at the conceit of Dr. Grainger's refractory Muse! Where it happen'd I do not know, but I am certain, very certain, that it was not, as Mr. Boswell asserts, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's<sup>1</sup>, for they were not, I believe, even personally known to each other.

But some very beautiful lines out of another Poem, by the same Author, I have often heard him repeat, and express great admiration of them.

'O Solitude, romantick maid,  
Whether by nodding towers you tread;  
Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,  
Or hover o'er the yawning tomb;  
Or climb the Andes' clifted side,  
Or by the Nile's coy source abide;  
Or, starting from your half year's sleep,  
From Hecla view the thawing deep;  
Or at the purple dawn of day,  
Tadmor's marble waste survey?'

I shall never forget the concordance of the sound of his voice, with the grandeur of those images<sup>3</sup>; nor indeed for the same reason the gothick<sup>4</sup> dignity of his Aspect, his look and manner, when repeating sublime passages.

But what was very remarkable, though his cadence in reading poetry was so judiciously emphatical as to give a double force to the words he utter'd, yet in reading prose, particularly common and familiar subjects, narrations, essays, letters, &c., nothing could be more injudicious than his manner, beginning every period with a pompous accent, and reading it with a whine, or with a kind of spasmodic struggle for utterance; and this, not from any natural infirmity, but from a strange singularity, in

of gentle manners you have said enough." *Life*, iv. 28.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, ii. 453. See *ib.* ii. 454, n. 2, where Johnson said:—'Percy, Sir, was angry with me for laughing at *The Sugar-Cane*; for he had a mind to make a great thing of Grainger's rats.'

<sup>2</sup> He repeated these lines at Ash-

bourne, and observed:—'This, Sir, is very noble.' *Ib.* iii. 197.

<sup>3</sup> After 'images' Miss Reynolds had at first written:—'Nor indeed for this same reason the sublime pleasure I have received on hearing him read some passages out of Homer.'

<sup>4</sup> She means, I think, 'the rude dignity.' See *ante*, i. 478.

reading

reading on, in one breath, as if he had made a resolution not to respire till he had closed the sentence<sup>1</sup>.

Some lines also he used to repeat in his best manner, written in memory of Bishop Boulter, which I believe are not much known :—

'Some write their wrongs in marble: he, more just,  
Stoop'd down serene and wrote them in the dust;  
Trod under foot, the sport of every wind,  
Swept from the earth, and blotted from his mind.  
There, secret in the grave, he bade them lie,  
And grieved they could not 'scape the Almighty's eye\*.'

A lady, who had learnt them from Dr. Johnson, thought she had made a mistake, or had forgotten some words, as she could not make out a reference to the particle *there*, and mention'd

<sup>1</sup> The following passage she has scored out :—'His sonorous voice, so judiciously emphatical, the apostlick [*sic*] dignity of his aspect, his look, his manner, when repeating any sublime passages, either of poetry or of prose, gave a double force to the words he utter'd. But this indeed can only be said of him when reading grand or solemn subjects, for in reading common prose his manner, or rather his tone of voice, was as disgusting as vice versa it was enchanting, proportionally so as the subject was common and familiar, which all his acquaintance must certainly remember, especially if they ever heard him read an [*sic*] newspaper, magazine, letters, &c.

For his reading poetry see *ante*, i. 347, 457, and *Life*, v. 115. When he read a passage in *The Spectator* Boswell recorded :—'He read so well that everything acquired additional weight and grace from his utterance.' *Life*, ii. 212.

<sup>2</sup> From *Boulter's Monument* by Samuel Madden. See *ante*, ii. 212, for Johnson's castigation of that work. Swift had found 'one comfortable circumstance' in the appointment of

Boulter to the primacy. He would be opposed to Wood's half-pence. 'Money,' he wrote, 'the great divider of the world, has by a strange revolution been the great uniter of a most divided people. Who would leave a hundred pounds a year in England (a country of freedom) to be paid a thousand in Ireland out of Wood's exchequer? The gentleman they have lately made primate would never quit his seat in an English House of Lords and his preferments at Oxford and Bristol, worth twelve hundred pounds a year, for four times the denomination here, but not half the value.' Swift's *Works*, xii. 162. Hawkins writes :—'Dr. Madden some years afterwards, being mindful to republish the poem, submitted it to Johnson's correction, and I found among his books a copy of the poem, with a note in a spare leaf thereof, purporting that the author had made him a visit, and for a very few remarks and alterations of it had presented him with ten guineas. Hawkins, p. 391. In the British Museum there are two copies of the poem, one printed in Dublin and one in London, both published the  
it



it to him. No, he said, she had not, and, after seesawing a few minutes, express'd some surprise that the defect should have escaped his observation.

Sometime after he told the Lady that these lines were inserted in the last edition of his Dictionary, under the word *sport*. But I had reason to believe that he mistrusted they were not a literal copy of the original<sup>1</sup>, as about this time I well remember he express'd great solicitude, and made much enquiry among the Booksellers, to procure the printed poem; whether he succeeded or not I never heard.

Of Goldsmith's *Traveller* he used to speak in terms of the highest commendation<sup>2</sup>. A lady<sup>3</sup> I remember, who had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Johnson read it from end to end, before it was publish'd just as it came out from the press, to testify her admiration of it, exclaim'd, 'I never more shall think Dr. Goldsmith ugly.' In having thought so, however, she was by no means singular; an instance of which I am rather inclined to mention, because it involves a remarkable one of Dr. Johnson's ready wit; for this lady, one evening, being in a large Party, was call'd upon after supper for her Toast, and seeming embarrass'd, she was desired to give the ugliest [*sic*] man she knew; and she immediately named Dr. Goldsmith. On which a lady on the other side of the Table rose up and reach'd across to shake hands with her, expressing some desire of being better acquainted with her, it being the first time they had met; on which Dr. Johnson said, 'Thus the Ancients, on the commencement of their Friendships, used to sacrifice a Beast betwixt them.'

same year, 1745. I have not discovered any variations in the text. No second edition is known of in Ireland. If Hawkins's statement is true, the poem, as corrected by Johnson, has never been printed. In that case the corrected copy may still be in existence. It seems, however, likely that Hawkins was mistaken.

<sup>1</sup> The first of these lines runs in the printed poem (p. 73):—'Men grave their wrongs,' &c. In the

*Dictionary* Johnson gives it:—'Some grave,' &c. He quoted it to Miss Reynolds:—'Some write.'

<sup>2</sup> 'He said of Goldsmith's *Traveller*, "There has not been so fine a poem since Pope's time."' *Life*, ii. 5. See also *ib.* iii. 252. In the interval had been published Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, his own *Vanity of Human Wishes*, and Gray's *Elegy*.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Cholmondely. MISS REYNOLDS. For this lady see *Life*, iii. 318, and *ante*, i. 451.

Sir

Sir Joshua, I have often thought, never exhibited a more striking proof of his excellence in portrait-Painting, than in giving Dignity to Dr. Goldsmith's countenance, and yet preserving a strong likeness<sup>1</sup>. For on the contrary his Aspect from head to foot impress'd every one at first sight with an idea of his being a low mechanic; particularly, I believe, a journeyman tailor<sup>2</sup>. A little concurring instance of this I well remember. One Day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, in company with some gentlemen and Ladies, he was relating how he had been insulted by some gentlemen he had accidentally met (I think at a Coffee-House). 'The fellow,' he said 'took me for a tailor!' on which all the Party either laugh'd aloud or shew'd they suppress'd a laugh<sup>3</sup>.

This little anecdote of Goldsmith is similar to that which Mr. Boswell relates of Johnson's having told him that a gentlewoman had offer'd him a shilling for handing her across a street. But I thought it not a little surprising that he should add, 'No person would have believed this, if Johnson had not said it himself<sup>4</sup>.'

Dr. Johnson seem'd to have much more kindness for Gold-

<sup>1</sup> C. R. Leslie points out 'that the ideal drapery of this portrait and the view of the face almost exactly correspond to the painter's treatment of his very early portrait of his own father.' Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 361.

<sup>2</sup> 'I remember Miss Reynolds said of this portrait that it was a very great likeness of the Doctor, but the most flattered picture she ever knew her brother to have painted.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 326.

<sup>3</sup> 'His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman.' *Life*, i. 413. 'His face,' says Dr. Percy, 'was marked with strong lines of thinking. His first appearance was not captivating.' Goldsmith's *Misc. Works*, i. 117.

<sup>3</sup> In one of Miss Reynolds's manuscripts the story is introduced as follows:—'Dr. Goldsmith was indeed very ugly, he had a vulgar mean aspect, more the look of a journeyman taylor from head to foot than any man I ever saw, which created a laugh throughout a pretty large company of gentlemen and ladies, on his saying he had been insulted,' &c.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Reynolds misunderstood Boswell, who wrote:—'This, if told by most people, would have been thought an invention; when told by Johnson, it was believed by his friends as much as if they had seen what passed.' *Life*, ii. 434. Boswell was thinking of the improbability of such a thing happening to any one. The gentlewoman, it must be remembered, 'was somewhat in liquor.'

smith,

smith, than Goldsmith had for him<sup>1</sup>. He always appear'd to be overawed by Johnson<sup>2</sup>, particularly when in company with people of any consequence, visibly as if impress'd with fear doubtless of disgrace; for I have been witness to many mortifications he has suffer'd in his company: one Day in particular, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, a gentleman to whom he was talking his *best* stop'd [*sic*] him, in the midst of his discourse, with 'Hush! hush! Dr. Johnson is going to say something<sup>3</sup>.'

At another time, a gentleman who was sitting between Dr. Johnson and Dr. Goldsmith, and with whom he had been disputing, remarked to another, loud enough for Goldsmith to hear him, 'That he had a fine time of it, between *Ursa Major* and *Ursa Minor*<sup>4</sup>!'

Dr. Johnson seem'd to delight in drawing characters; and when he [did so] *con amore*, delighted every one that heard him<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, I cannot say I ever heard him draw any *con odiare* [*sic*], tho' he professed himself to be, or at least to love, a *good hater*<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See, however, *Life*, ii. 66, where Goldsmith said:—'Johnson, to be sure, has a roughness in his manner; but no man alive has a more tender heart. *He has nothing of the bear but his skin*'; and ii. 256, where, on Johnson asking his pardon, 'he answered placidly, "It must be much from you, Sir, that I take ill."''

<sup>2</sup> 'Goldsmith could sometimes take adventurous liberties with him, and escape unpunished.' *Ib.* iv. 113.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* ii. 257.

<sup>4</sup> Boswell's father and Gray both gave Johnson the name of *Ursa Major*. *Ib.* v. 384. See *ib.* p. 97, and *ante*, i. 270, where Johnson and Goldsmith are distinguished by an insolent fellow as Doctor Major and Doctor Minor.

<sup>5</sup> 'BOSWELL. "His power of reasoning is very strong, and he has a peculiar art of drawing characters, which is as rare as good portrait painting." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "He is

undoubtedly admirable in this; but, in order to mark the characters which he draws, he overcharges them, and gives people more than they really have, whether of good or bad.'" *Life*, iii. 332. See also ii. 306; iii. 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 204. In one of her MSS. Miss Reynolds continues:—'But I have remarked that his dislike of any one seldom prompted him to say much more than that the fellow is a *blockhead*, a *poor creature*, or some such epithet.'

Speaking of Churchill he said:—'No, Sir, I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I will call him a blockhead still.' *Life*, i. 419. 'Fielding being mentioned, Johnson exclaimed, "he was a blockhead.'" *Ib.* ii. 173. He told Hector's maid-servant that she was 'a blockhead,' to Boswell's surprise, who 'never heard the word applied to a woman before.' *Ib.* ii. 456. Goldsmith called Sterne 'a blockhead.' *Ib.* ii. 173, *n.* 2.

It is much to be wish'd, in justice to Dr. Johnson's character, that the many jocular and ironical speeches which have been recorded of him had been mark'd as such, for the information of those who were unacquainted with him, when not so apparently unlikely as the above is to be taken in a literal sense. If he could conceive a hatred for any person, it was only for the vicious.

I shall never forget the exalted character he drew of his Friend Mr. Langton, nor with what energy, what fond delight he expatiated in his praise, giving him every perfection that could adorn humanity. Particularly, I remember, he dwelt on his mental acquirements, as a Scholar, a Philosopher, and a Divine, to which he added the finishing polish of the fine Gentleman<sup>1</sup>. A literary Lady, Miss H. More, who was present seem'd much struck with admiration, not only perhaps of the excellence of Mr. Langton's character, but of Dr. Johnson's, which appear'd, I thought, with redoubled lustre, reflected from his luminous display of the virtues of his Friend.

This brings to my remembrance the unparall'd eulogium which the late Lord Bath<sup>2</sup> made on——<sup>3</sup> (a lady he was

<sup>1</sup> 'We talked of Mr. Langton. Johnson, with a warm vehemence of affectionate regard, exclaimed, "The earth does not bear a worthier man than Bennet Langton."' *Life*, iii. 161. See also *ante*, i. 182 n.

<sup>2</sup> William Pulteney; 'as a paltry fellow as could be,' Johnson called him. *Life*, v. 339. 'The legacies he has left are trifling,' wrote Chesterfield; 'for, in truth, he cared for nobody; the words *give* and *bequeath* were too shocking to him to repeat, and so he left all in one word to his brother.' Chesterfield's *Letters*, iv. 210. Smollett said of his later years that 'he incurred the contempt or detestation of mankind, and remained a solitary monument of blasted ambition.' *History of England*, iii. 79.

'Through Clouds of Passion P...s views are clear,  
He foams a Patriot to subside a Peer:

Impatient sees his country bought and sold,  
And damns the market where he takes no gold.'

Warton's *Pope's Works*, iv. 347. The eulogium of such a man was worthless.

Mrs. Montagu, in her turn, puffed him. 'His Lordship's talents,' she wrote, 'like colours in the prism, formed of the brightest rays, are so well arranged and so happily mingled that, though strong and vivid, they never pain the sight.' *Letters of Mrs. Montagu*, iv. 346.

<sup>3</sup> 'I omit the initials of this Lady's name, in compliance to her delicacy  
intimately

intimately acquainted with,) in speaking of her to Sir Joshua Reynolds. His lordship said, that 'he did not believe that there was a more perfect human Being created; or that there ever would be created, than Mrs. —.' I give the very words I heard from Sir Joshua's own mouth, and from whom also I heard that he repeated them to Mr. Burke; and observing that Lord Bath could not have said more, and 'I do not think that he said too much,' was Mr. Burke's reply. I have also heard Dr. Johnson speak of this Lady in terms of high admiration. 'Sir, that Lady exerts more mind in conversation than any Person I ever met with: Sir, she displays such powers of ratiocination, even radiations of intellectual excellence as are amazing!'

On the praises of Mrs. Thrale he used to dwell with a peculiar delight, a paternal fondness, expressive of conscious exultation in being so intimately acquainted with her<sup>2</sup>. One day, in speaking of her to Mr. Harris, Author of *Hermes*<sup>3</sup>, and expatiating on her various perfections,—the solidity of her virtues, the brilliancy of her wit, and the strength of her understanding, &c.—he quoted some lines, a stanza, I believe, but from what author I know not, with which he concluded his most eloquent eulogium, and of these I retain'd but the two last lines:—

' Virtues—of such a generous kind,  
Good in the last recesses of the mind.'

Dr. Johnson had a most sincere and tender regard for Mrs. Thr-le, and no wonder; she would with much apparent affection

and in compliment to the discerning Public.

This note was written many years before Mrs. Montagu's Decease, but left uncanceled out of Respect to her memory.' MISS REYNOLDS.

<sup>1</sup> For Johnson's high praise of her see *Life*, iv. 275. Of her pretentious *Essay on Shakespeare* he said:—'It does *her* honour, but it would do nobody else honour.' He could not get through it. *Ib.* ii. 88; v. 245. Much of her reputation was no doubt due to the splendid house she kept.

Horace Walpole wrote on May 27, 1775 (*Letters*, vi. 217):—'The husband of Mrs. Montagu of Shakespeareshire is dead, and has left her an estate of seven thousand pounds a year in own power.' See *ante*, i. 287, 338, 351.

<sup>2</sup> He wrote to her on her second marriage:—'I who have loved you, esteemed you, revered you, and served you, I who long thought you the first of womankind,' &c. *Letters*, ii. 406.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 70.

overlook

overlook his foibles. One Day at her own Table, before a large company, he spoke so very roughly to her, that every person present was surprised how she could bear it so placidly; and on the Ladies withdrawing, one of them express'd great astonishment how Dr. Johnson could speak in such harsh terms to her! But to this she said no more than 'Oh! Dear good man!' This short reply appeared so strong a proof of her *generous virtues* that the Lady took the first opportunity of communicating it to him, repeating her own animadversion that had occasion'd it. *He seem'd much delighted*<sup>1</sup> with this intelligence, and sometime after, as he was lying back in his Chair, seeming to be half asleep, but more evidently musing on this pleasing incident, he repeated in a loud whisper, 'Oh! Dear good man!' This was a common habit of his, when anything very flattering, or very extraordinary ingross'd his thoughts, and I rather wonder that none of his Biographers have taken any notice of it, or of his praying in the same manner; at least I do not know that they have<sup>2</sup>.

Nor has any one, I believe, described his extraordinary gestures or anticks with his hands and feet, particularly when passing over the threshold of a Door, or rather before he would venture to pass through *any* doorway<sup>3</sup>. On entering Sir Joshua's house with poor Mrs. Williams, a blind lady who lived with him, he would quit her hand, or else whirl her about on the steps as he whirled and twisted about to perform his gesticulations; and as soon as he had finish'd, he would give a sudden spring, and make such an extensive stride over the threshold, as if he was trying for a wager how far he could stride, Mrs. Williams standing groping about outside the door, unless the servant or the mistress of the House more commonly took hold of her

<sup>1</sup> Miss Reynolds had at first written, instead of the words in italics:— 'Never shall I forget how delighted he seemed.'

<sup>2</sup> For his habit of talking to himself see *ante*, i. 439; ii. 216.

<sup>3</sup> For his touching the posts as he walked along see *Life*, i. 485 *n*.

Lord Carlisle recorded in his Diary

on Feb. 14, 1852:—'Macaulay owns to the feeling Dr. Johnson had, of thinking oneself bound sometimes to touch a particular rail or post, and to tread always in the middle of the paving stone. I certainly have had this very strongly.' Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ed. 1877, ii. 199.

hand to conduct her in, leaving Dr. Johnson to perform at the Parlour Door much the same exercise over again.

But the strange positions in which he would place his feet (generally I think before he began his straddles, as if necessarily preparatory) are scarcely credible. Sometimes he would make the back part of his heels to touch, sometimes the extremity of his toes, as if endeavouring to form a triangle, or some geometrical figure<sup>1</sup>; and as for his gestures with his hands, they were equally as strange; sometimes he would hold them up with some of his fingers bent, as if he had been seized with the cramp, and sometimes at his Breast in motion like those of a jockey on full speed; and often would he lift them up as high as he could stretch over his head, for some minutes. But the manoeuvre that used the most particularly to engage the attention of the company was his stretching out his arm with a full cup of tea in his hand, in every direction, often to the great annoyance of the person who sat next him, indeed to the imminent danger of their cloaths, perhaps of a Lady's Court dress; sometimes he would twist himself round with his face close to the back of his chair, and finish his cup of tea, breathing very hard, as if making a laborious effort to accomplish it.

What could have induced him to practise such extraordinary gestures who can divine! his head, his hands and his feet often in motion at the same time. Many people have supposed that they were the natural effects of a nervous disorder, but had that been the case he could not have sat still when he chose, which he did<sup>2</sup>, and so still indeed when sitting for his picture, as often to have been complimented with being a pattern for sitters<sup>3</sup>, no

<sup>1</sup> In one of her manuscripts Miss Reynolds wrote:—

‘Sometimes he would with great earnestness place his feet in a particular position, sometimes making his heels to touch, sometimes his toes, as if he was endeavouring to form a triangle, at least the two sides of one, and after having finish'd he would beat his sides, or the skirts of his coat, repeatedly with his hands, as if for joy that he had done his

duty, and what was very extraordinary, after he had quitted the place, particularly at the entrance of a door, he would return to the same spot, evidently, I thought, from a scruple of conscience, and perform it all over again.’

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Reynolds's portrait of Johnson, which had belonged to Boswell, and afterwards to his son James, was sold on June 3, 1825, to Mr. Graves, slight

slight proof of his complaisance or his good-nature. I remember a lady told him he sat like Patience on a monument smiling at grief<sup>1</sup>, which made him laugh heartily at the ridiculous coincidence of the idea with his irksome situation; for irksome it doubtless was to him, restraining himself as he did, even from his common and most habitual motion of seesawing, the more difficult for him to effect because the most habitual.

It was not only at the entrance of a Door that he exhibited his gigantick straddles but often in the middle of a Room, as if trying to make the floor to shake; and often in the street, even with company, who would walk on at a little distance till he had finished his ludicrous beat, for fear of being surrounded with a mob; and then he would hasten to join them, with an air of great satisfaction, seeming totally unconscious of having committed [*sic*] any impropriety.

I remember to have heard Sir Joshua Reynolds relate, that being with Dr. Johnson at Dorchester on their way to Devonshire, they went to see Corfe Castle. I believe that neither of them was sufficiently known to Mr. Banks to introduce themselves as visitors to him; however that might be, he shewed them great civility, politely attending them through the apartments, &c., in the finest of which Dr. Johnson began to exhibit his Anticks, stretching out his legs alternately as far as he could possibly stretch; at the same time pressing his foot on the floor as heavily as he could possibly press, as if endeavouring to smooth the carpet, or rather perhaps to rumple it, and every now and then collecting all his force, apparently to effect a concussion of the floor. Mr. Banks, regarding him for some time with silent astonishment, at last said, 'Dr. Johnson, I believe the floor is very firm;' which immediately made him desist, probably without making any reply<sup>2</sup>. It would have been difficult indeed to frame an apology for such ridiculous manœuvres.

It was amazing, so dim-sighted as Dr. Johnson was, how very observant he was of appearances in Dress, in behaviour, and even of the servants, how they waited at table, &c.; *the more*

a hop-merchant of Southwark, for     <sup>1</sup> *Twelfth Night*, Act ii. Sc. 4,  
 £76. 13s. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1. 117.  
 1825, i. 607.     <sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 145.



*particularly, so seeming as he did to be stone-blind to his own*<sup>1</sup>. One day as his man Frank was waiting at Sir Joshua's table, he observed with some emotion that he had the salver under his arm. Nor would the behaviour of the company on some occasions escape his animadversions; particularly for their perversion of the idea of refinement in the use of a water-glass, a very strange perversion indeed he thought it, as some people use it. He had also a great dislike to the use of a pocket-handkerchief at meals, when, if he wanted one, I have seen him rise from his Chair, and go at some distance with his back towards the company, performing the operation as silently as possible.

Dr. Johnson's sight was so very defective that he could scarcely distinguish the Face of his most intimate acquaintance at a half yard's distance from him, and, in general, it was observable that his critical remarks on dress, &c. were the result of a very close inspection of the object<sup>2</sup>; partly, perhaps, excited by curiosity, and partly from a desire of exacting admiration of his perspicacity, of which it was remarkable he was not a little ambitious.

That Dr. Johnson possessed the essential principles of politeness and of good taste, which I suppose are the same, at least concomitant, none who knew his virtues and his genius will, I imagine, be inclined to dispute<sup>3</sup>. But why they remained with him, like gold in the ore, unfashioned and unseen, except in his literary capacity, no person that I know of has made any enquiry, tho' in general it has been spoken of as an unaccountable inconsistency in his character. But a little reflection on the disqualifying influence of blindness and deafness would suggest many apologies for Dr. Johnson's want of politeness. The particular instance I have just mentioned, of his inability to discriminate the features of any one's face, deserves perhaps more

<sup>1</sup> The words italicized have been scored through.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 337.

<sup>3</sup> Politeness he one day defined as 'fictitious benevolence.' *Life*, v. 82. See *ante*, i. 169. Swift looked upon good manners as 'a sort of artificial good sense.' *The Tatler*, No. 20. 'Whoever,' he said, 'makes the

fewest persons uneasy is the best bred in the company.' Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xiv. 182. 'Courts,' he said, 'are the worst of all schools to teach good manners.' *Ib.* p. 189. 'A Court is the best school for manners.' Chesterfield's *Letters to his Godson*, p. 392.

than

than any other to be taken into consideration, wanting, as he did, the aid of those intelligent signs, or insinuations, which the countenance displays in social converse; and which, in their slightest degree, influence and regulate the manners of the polite, even of the common observer.

And to his defective hearing, perhaps, his unaccommodating manners may be equally ascribed, which not only precluded him from the perception of the expressive tones of the voice of others, but from hearing the boisterous sound of his own.

Under such disadvantages, it was not much to be wonder'd at that Dr. Johnson should have committed [*sic*] many blunders and absurdities, and excited surprise and resentment in company; one in particular I remember to have heard related of him many years since. Being in company with Mr. Garrick and some others, who were unknown to Dr. Johnson, he was saying something tending to the disparagement of the character or of the works of a gentleman present—I have forgot the particulars; on which Mr. Garrick touched his foot under the table; but he still went on, and Garrick, much alarmed, touched him a second time, and, I believe, the third; at last Johnson exclaimed, 'David, David, is it you? What makes you tread on my toes so?' This little anecdote, perhaps, indicates as much the want of prudence in Dr. Johnson as the want of sight. But had he at first seen Garrick's expressive countenance<sup>1</sup>, and (probably) the embarrassment of the rest of the company on the occasion, it doubtless would not have happen'd.

Dr. Johnson was very ambitious of excelling in common acquirements, as well as the uncommon, and particularly in feats of activity<sup>2</sup>. One day, as he was walking in Gunisbury Park (or Paddock)<sup>3</sup> with some gentlemen and ladies, who were admiring the extraordinary size of some of the trees, one of the gentlemen said that, when he was a boy, he made nothing of climbing

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, i. 457, where Murphy writes of Johnson's slighting Garrick:—'The fact was, Johnson could not see the passions as they rose and chased one another in the varied features of that expressive face.'

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, i. 224, for his swimming; *Life*, i. 477, *n.* 1, for his rolling down a hill; and ii. 299, for his courage and strength.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the grounds of Gunnersbury House.

(swarming

(swarming<sup>1</sup>, I think, was the phrase) the largest there. 'Why, I can swarm it now,' replied Dr. Johnson, which excited a hearty laugh—he was then, I believe, between fifty and sixty; on which he ran to the tree, clung round the trunk, and ascended to the branches, and, I believe, would have gone in amongst them, had he not been very earnestly entreated to descend; and down he came with a triumphant air, seeming *to make nothing of it*.

At another time, at a gentleman's seat in Devonshire, as he and some company were sitting in a saloon, before which was a spacious lawn, it was remarked as a very proper place for running a Race. A young lady present boasted that she could outrun any person; on which Dr. Johnson rose up and said, 'Madam, you cannot outrun me;' and, going out on the Lawn, they started. The lady at first had the advantage; but Dr. Johnson happening to have slippers on much too small for his feet, kick'd them off up into the air, and ran a great length without them, leaving the lady far behind him, and, having won the victory, he returned, leading Her by the hand, with looks of high exultation and delight<sup>2</sup>.

It was at this place where the lady of the House before a large company at Dinner address'd herself to him with a very audible voice, 'Pray, Dr. Johnson, what made you say in your Dictionary that the Pastern of a Horse was the knee of an [*sic*] Horse<sup>3</sup>?' 'Ignorance, madam, ignorance,' answered Johnson. And I was told that at another time at the same table, when the lady was pressing him to eat something<sup>4</sup>, he rose up with his knife in his hand, and loudly exclaim'd, 'I vow to God I cannot eat a bit more.' to the great terror, it was said, of all the company. I did not doubt of the gentleman's veracity who related this. But I was rather surprised at this expression from Johnson; for never

<sup>1</sup> *Swarming*, in this sense, is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*. Miss Reynolds in one of her manuscripts writes *warming*.

<sup>2</sup> From Paris he wrote:—'I ran a race in the rain this day, and beat Baretti.' *Life*, ii. 386. See *Letters*, ii. 363, n. 1, for his race with his friend Payne.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 182 n.; *Life*, i. 293, 378.

This blunder is the stranger as in Bailey's *Dictionary*, which he had before him when writing his own, *pastern* is correctly defined.

<sup>4</sup> Boswell records in his *Tour*:—'I must take some merit from my contriving that he shall not be asked twice to eat or drink anything (which always disgusts him).' *Life*, v. 264. See *ante*, ii. 184 n.

did I know any person so cautious in mentioning that awful name on common occasions, and I have often heard him rebuke those who have unawares interjectionally [*sic*] made use of it <sup>1</sup>.

It was about this time when a lady was traveling [*sic*] with him in a post-chaise near a village Churchyard <sup>2</sup>, in which she had seen a very striking [*sic*] object of maternal affection, a little verdent [*sic*] flowery monument, raised by the Widow'd Mother over the grave of her only child, and had heard some melancholy circumstances concerning them, and as she was relating them to Dr. Johnson, she heard him make heavy sighs, indeed sobs, and turning round she saw his Dear Face bathed in tears, an incident which induced the Lady to describe them in a little poem intitled [*sic*] *A melancholy* <sup>3</sup> Tale, founded upon true circumstances <sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 18 n., 45 n.

<sup>2</sup> Wear in Devonshire (*sic*), near Torrington. MISS REYNOLDS.

Johnson went to Devonshire in 1762, and spent two days at Torrington, with Reynolds's brothers-in-law, Palmer and Johnson. Miss Reynolds, who saw him there, was no doubt the lady. Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 215, 217; *Life*, i. 377. 'Mr. Palmer's house is in its arrangements little altered since Dr. Johnson dined in it in 1762.' Murray's *Handbook to Devon*, ed. 1872, p. 260.

<sup>3</sup> *Melancholy* is scored through in the original.

<sup>4</sup> In one of her manuscripts, after 'bathed in tears,' Miss Reynolds added:—'A circumstance he had probably long forgotten, when he wrote at the end of the manuscript Poem with his correcting pen in red ink, *I know not when I have been so*

*much affected*. Dr. Johnson honour'd two more poems by the same Author with his corrections and inserted them in Mrs. Williams's collection of poems, without knowing who was the Author till many years after. In the same Book is a most beautiful little composition of his own, a Fairy tale, which I think shews the most amiable view of Dr. Johnson's mind of any of his works.' See *Life*, ii. 26.

He wrote to her on June 16, 1780:—'Do not, my love, burn your papers. I have mended little but some bad rhymes. I thought them very pretty, and was much moved in reading them.' *Letters*, ii. 180.

In Lady Colomb's collection is a copy of her verses mended by Johnson. The following extract shows the badness of her rhymes and the nature of his corrections. These last, in italics, were written above the original.

'As late disconsolate in pensive mood  
I sat revolving life's vicissitude  
Oft sigh'd to think how youth had pass'd away,  
And saw with sorrow Hope's diminish'd ray,  
*View'd the dark scene with melancholy gaze*  
In prospect view the dismal scene to come  
*Should Fate to helpless age prolong my Days*  
Of gloomy age should Fate my Days prolong,

Tho'

Tho' it cannot be said that Dr. Johnson was 'in manners gentle,' yet it justly can, that he was 'in affections mild'; benevolent and Compassionate, and to this singularity of character, inverting the common forms of civilized society, may I believe be ascribed in a great measure his extraordinary celebrity, sublimated, as one may say, with terror and with love.

But indeed it is worthy of consideration whether these, or any of Dr. Johnson's singularities, would have excited such admiration, had they not been associated with the idea of his moral and religious character; hence, most undoubtedly, that universal homage of respect and veneration that has been paid to his memory.

Much may be said in excuse for Dr. Johnson's asperity of manners at times, being, I believe, the natural effects of those inherent melancholy infirmities, both mental and corporeal, to which he was subject. Very rarely I believe—perhaps never—was he intentionally asperous, unless provoked by something said or done that seem'd detrimental to the cause of religion or morality, even in the slightest degree<sup>2</sup>. Tho' indeed it must be confessed that in his zealous ardour to defend the former he too often trespassed on the borders of the latter.

*in the middle way*  
Yet whilst I linger on the doubtful steep  
Where Life's high vigour verges to decay  
Where youth declining seems with age to meet  
Sure Nature acts, I cry'd, by wond'rous Laws  
Nature to her own Laws appears averse,  
She *yet all hope withdraws*  
Still prompts resistance where there's no redress;

*The springing grass, the circulating air.*  
Cheers every sense the common air I breathe  
*to praise and prayer.*  
Each common bounty prompts to prayer and praise.'

Johnson seems to have soon grown weary of correcting; at all events the corrections in the first few lines are not much less than those in the whole poem of about 170 lines.

<sup>1</sup> 'Of manners gentle, of affections mild,  
In wit a man; simplicity a child.

Pope, *Epitaph on Gay*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Obscenity and impiety (said in my company.' *Life*, iv. 295. See Johnson) have always been repressed *ante*, ii. 224.

But

But what I believe chiefly conduced to fix that general stigma on his character for ill-breeding was his naturally loud and imperious tone of voice<sup>1</sup>, which apparently heightened his slightest dissenting opinion to a degree of harsh reproof, and, with his corresponding Aspect, had in general an intimidating influence on those who were not much acquainted with him, and often excited a degree of resentment, which his words in their common acceptation had no tendency to provoke. I have often on those occasions heard him express great surprise that what he had said could have given any offence<sup>2</sup>, but rarely, I believe, any sorrow<sup>3</sup>, being conscious of the rectitude of his intentions, which to preserve seem'd his chief concern, the chief object of his meditations, in which not unfrequently he seem'd absorbed even when in company.

It was doubtless very natural for so good a man to keep a strict watch over his mind<sup>4</sup>; but so very strict as Dr. Johnson apparently did may perhaps in some measure be attributed to his dread of its hereditary tendencies, which, I had reason to believe, he was very apprehensive bordered upon insanity<sup>5</sup>. Probably his studious attention to repel their prevalency, together with his experience of divine assistance, co-operating with his reasoning faculties, may have proved in the highest degree conducive to the exaltation of his piety, the pre-eminency of his wisdom; and I think it is probable that all his natural defects which so peculiarly debard [*sic*] him from unprofitable amusements were also conducive to the same end<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 451.

<sup>2</sup> 'After musing for some time, he said, "I wonder how I should have any enemies; for I do harm to nobody."' *Life*, iv. 168.

When he was ill of the palsy, he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'I have in this still scene of life great comfort in reflecting that I have given very few reason to hate me. I hope scarcely any man has known me closely but for his benefit, or cursorily but to his innocent entertainment.' *Letters*, ii. 314. See also *Life*, iv. 280, where he says that he knows

'no such weak-nerved people' as to be hurt by being contradicted roughly and harshly; and iv. 295.

<sup>3</sup> For his readiness to seek a reconciliation, see *ante*, ii. 223.

<sup>4</sup> See *ante*, ii. 225, where Sir Joshua Reynolds also mentions 'the strict watch Johnson kept over himself.'

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 409.

<sup>6</sup> In another version of the *Recollections* Miss Reynolds writes:—'Being so peculiarly debarred from the enjoyment of those amusements which the eye and the ear afford, doubtless he sought more assiduously

That

That Dr. Johnson's mind was preserved from insanity by his Devotional aspirations may surely be reasonably supposed. No man could have a firmer reliance on the efficacy of Prayer, and he would often with a solemn earnestness beg of his intimate friends to pray for him, and apparently on very slight occasions of corporeal indisposition.

But that he should have desired one prayer from Dr. Dodd, who was such an atrocious offender, has I know been very much condemn'd, as highly injurious to his character, not considering perhaps that Dr. Johnson might have had sufficient reason to believe Dodd to be a sincere Penitent, which indeed was the case<sup>1</sup>; besides his mind was so soften'd with pitty [*sic*] and

for those gratifications which scientific pursuits or philosophic meditation bestow.' Somewhat the same thought is expressed by Baron Grimm:— 'Je ne saurais m'empêcher d'avancer, en passant, un paradoxe qui mérite cependant d'être approfondi; c'est que dans l'état où sont les choses, et l'esprit de société étouffant continuellement en nous le génie, rien n'est si favorable à sa conservation que des sens peu parfaits. Ainsi, la vue extrêmement basse vous empêchera de remarquer mille petites manières, mille minuties, et vous ne pourrez jamais avoir envie de les imiter, parce que vous ne les aurez jamais aperçues. Ainsi, votre oreille peu fine vous empêchera de distinguer la différence des tons, et vous serez garanti de la manie de vous y exercer, parce que vous ne les aurez pas sentis. C'est ainsi que votre génie concentré en lui-même au milieu de la société conservera sa force et sa sûreté, et sera à l'abri des dangers qui l'entourent.' *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. 1814, i. 187.

<sup>1</sup> 'Atrocious' is an absurd term to apply to Dodd. Johnson in his last letter to him said:—'Be comforted; your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye of

turpitude. It corrupted no man's principles; it attacked no man's life. It involved only a temporary and reparable injury. . . . In requital of those well-intended offices which you are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare.' *Life*, iii. 147.

Wesley, who visited Dodd in prison two days before his execution, said:— 'Such a prisoner I scarce ever saw before; much less such a condemned malefactor. I should think none could converse with him without acknowledging that God is with him.' *Wesley's Journal*, ed. 1827, i. 378.

Dodd had forged the signature of his late pupil, the fifth Earl of Chesterfield, to a bond for £4,200, 'flattering himself with hopes that he might be able to repay its amount without being detected.' *Life*, iii. 140.

Five years earlier he had published a sermon 'intended to have been preached in the Chapel-Royal at St. James's,' on 'the Frequency of Capital Punishments inconsistent with Justice, sound Policy and Religion.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1772, p. 182.

In the Index to the first 56 volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine* under compassion

compassion for him, so impress'd with the awful idea of his situation, the last evening of his life, he probably did not think of his former transgressions, or thought, perhaps, that he ought not to remember them, when the offender was so soon to appear before the Supreme Judge of Heaven and Earth.

Dr. Johnson gave me a copy of this letter, I believe the Day after Dodd's execution, and also of that which he wrote to Mr. Jenkinson (now the Earl of Liverpool) in Dodd's behalf, which, tho' they have already appear'd in Print, I am tempted to insert them, as they seem to have a slight connexion with some particulars which Dr. Johnson related to me at the same time, concerning Dodd's behaviour, which I believe are not much known. [For the letter to Jenkinson see *Life*, iii. 145, and to Dodd, *ib.* iii. 147.]

Dr. Johnson wrote his speech at his Tryal [*sic*], at least the best part of it, and also that which he spoke at the Place of execution<sup>1</sup>, with the alteration but of one word. It was originally, 'My life has been most dreadfully *Hypocritical*,' which Dodd objected to, and alter'd it for *dreadfully erroneous*<sup>2</sup> [*sic*].

Dr. Johnson told me that on Dodd's reading the letter he sent to him the evening before his execution, he gave it into the hands of his wife, with a strong injunction never to part

*Executions* is entered, 'See *Domestic Occurrences at the end of the Month*.'

Wraxall met Dodd at a dinner at the Messrs. Dilly in Nov. 1776. He describes him as 'a plausible, agreeable man, lively, entertaining, well-informed and communicative in conversation. . . . The King felt the strongest impulse to save him. . . . To the firmness of the Lord Chief Justice (Mansfield) his execution was due, for no sooner had he pronounced his decided opinion that no mercy ought to be extended, than the King, taking up the pen, signed the death warrant. . . . During a pelting shower of rain he was turned off at Tyburn. . . .

Lord Chesterfield never altogether surmounted the unfavourable impression produced by the prominent share which he took in Dodd's prosecution.' Wheatley's *Wraxall's Memoirs*, iv. 248.

<sup>1</sup> Dodd did not utter this speech, but left it with the sheriff. *Life*, iii. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Dodd objecting to *hypocritical* said:—'With this he could not charge himself.' *ib.* He kept up his self-deception to the end. As Johnson said of him:—'A man who has been canting all his life may cant to the last.' *ib.* iii. 270.

with



with it ; that he had slept during the Night, and when he awoke in the morning, he did not immediately recollect what he was to suffer, and the moment that he did, he express'd the utmost horror and agony of mind—outrageously vehement in his speech and in his looks—till he went into the Chapel, and on his coming out of it his face express'd the most angelic peace and composure.

Dr. Johnson also told me that Dodd probably entertain'd some hopes of life even to the last moment<sup>1</sup>, having been flatter'd by some of his medical friends that there was a chance of suspending its total extinction till he was cut down, by placing the knot of the rope in a particular manner behind his ear. That then he was to be carried to a convenient Place, where they would use their utmost endeavours to recover him. All this was done. The hangman observed their injunctions in fixing the rope, and as the cart drew off, said in Dodd's ear, you must not move an inch<sup>2</sup>! But he struggled.—Being carried to the place appointed, his friends endeavoured to restore him by bathing his Breast with warm water, which Dr. Johnson said was not so likely to have that effect as cold water. That a man wander'd round the Prison some Days before his execution, with bank notes in his Pocket to the amount of a thousand pounds, to bribe the jailor to let him escape.

I have been induced to mention all these particulars from a supposition (as I observed before) that they are but little known, having never heard any person speak of them (excepting that of the Bank notes) besides Dr. Johnson, who had his intelligence from the best authority, immediately after the

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Johnson told us that Dodd's city friends stood by him so, that a thousand pounds were ready to be given to the gaoler if he would let him escape.' *Life*, iii. 166. See *ib.* n. 3 for the convict who 'could not find that any one who had two hundred pounds was ever hanged.'

<sup>2</sup> In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1736, p. 549, it is reported that two house-breakers hanged at Bristol,

'when cut down and put in coffins came both to life; one though he had been blooded died about eleven at night; the other, continuing alive, was put in Bridewell, where great numbers of people resorted to see him. Having been always defective in his intellects he was not to be hanged, but to be taken care of in a Charity House.'

See also *ante*, ii. 143 n.

execution

execution. He had no personal acquaintance with Dodd. I believe he never was in his company<sup>1</sup>.

No man, I believe, was ever more desirous of doing good than Dr. Johnson, whether propel'd [*sic*] by Nature or by Reason; by both I should have thought, had I not so often heard him say, That 'Man's chief merit consists in resisting the impulses of his nature.' Not what may be call'd his second Nature, evil habits, &c., but his Nature originally corrupted from the fall. 'Nay, nay,' he would say (to a person who thought that Nature, Reason, and Virtue were indivisible [*sic*] in the mind of man, as inherent characteristic principles) 'If man is by nature prompted to act virtuously and right, all the divine precepts of the Gospel, all its denunciations, all the laws enacted by man to restrain man from evil had been needless<sup>2</sup>.'

It is certain that he was rather apt to doubt the sincerity of those who express'd much pity and compassion for the distresses of others<sup>3</sup>. How strange in Him, who 'had a tear for Pity And a Hand, open as Day for melting Charity<sup>4</sup>.'

And it has been thought almost equally as strange that he should have had no taste for music<sup>5</sup> or for Painting; but being so precluded as he was (I believe even from his infancy) from

<sup>1</sup> He had been once. *Life*, iii. 140.

<sup>2</sup> 'Whatever (said Johnson) is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently and confessedly so corrupt, that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes.' *Ib.* iv. 123.

<sup>3</sup> 'Talking of our feeling for the distresses of others:—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there is much noise made about it, but it is greatly exaggerated. No, Sir, we have a certain degree of feeling to prompt us to do good; more than that Providence does not intend. It would be misery to no purpose."... BOSWELL. "I have often blamed myself, Sir, for not feeling for others as sensibly as many say they do." JOHNSON. "Sir, don't be duped by them any more. You will find these very feeling people are not

very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*." *Ib.* ii. 94. See also *ib.* ii. 469, 471; *ante*, i. 205, 268.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Henry IV, Act. iv. Sc. 4, l. 31.

<sup>5</sup> In one of her manuscripts Miss Reynolds writes:—'Music apparently had a power to disgust him, particularly in Churches, which, I have heard him say, almost tempted him to go out of the Church. How very strange in so good a man, so good a poet, and so deep a philosopher!'

'Music (he said) excites in my mind no ideas, and hinders me from contemplating my own.' *Ante*, ii. 103. In his seventy-fourth year, he said, on hearing the music of a funeral procession:—'This is the first time that I have ever been affected by musical sounds.' *Life*, iv. 22.

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his defects of sight and of hearing, from receiving any gratification from either the one or the other, he could have had no taste for them, no acquired Taste, at least for painting, his sight being much more defective than his hearing. A natural good Taste he certainly possess'd for all the fine Arts, and from an observation I remember to have heard him make, when expatiating in praise of Dr. Burney's history of music—'That that work evidently proved that the Author of it understood the Philosophy of music better than any man who had ever written on that subject,' it must be supposed that he had felt its power, and that he had a taste for music<sup>1</sup>.

It is curious to observe the strong proofs that Dr. Burney gives throughout his Book almost, of the strict union of music with Painting, in using (when describing the excellence or the defects of a musical Composition) precisely the same words that a Painter must use in describing the excellence or the defects of a Picture.

It is with much regret that I reflect on my stupid negligence to write down some of Dr. Johnson's Discourses, his observations, precepts, &c. A few short sentences only did I ever take any account of in writing, and these I lately found in some old memorandum pocket-Books of ancient date, about the time of the commencement of my acquaintance with him. Those few indeed, relating to the character of the French, were taken *viva voce* the Day after his arrival from France, Novr. 14, -75<sup>2</sup>, intending them, I find, for the subject of a letter to a Friend in the Country.

Also from the same motive perhaps I wrote down a long narration which Mr. Baretti gave of some Paris inn adventures

<sup>1</sup> He heard the following passage read aloud from the preface to Dr. Burney's *History of Music* while it was yet in manuscript:—'The love of lengthened tones and modulated sounds seems a passion implanted in human nature throughout the globe; as we hear of no people, however wild and savage in other particulars, who have not music of some kind or

other, with which they seem greatly delighted.' "Sir," he cried, after a little pause, "this assertion I believe may be right." And then, seeing a minute or two on his chair, he forcibly added:—"All animated nature loves music—except myself!"' *Dr. Burney's Memoirs*, ii. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, ii. 401.

&c. related probably the next Day, which is verbatim as he spoke it with an intermixture of French phrases.

#### TALKING ON THE SUBJECT OF SCEPTICISM.

JOHNSON. 'The eyes of the mind are like the eyes of the Body. They can see but at such a distance. But because we cannot see beyond this point, is there nothing beyond it?'

#### ON THE WANT OF MEMORY.

'No, Sir, it is not true; in general every person has an equal capacity for reminiscence, and for one thing as well as another; otherwise it would be like a person's complaining that he could hold silver in his hand, but could not hold copper<sup>1</sup>.'

A GENTLEMAN. 'I think when a person laughs when alone he supposes himself for the moment with company.'

JOHNSON. 'Yes, if it be true that laughter is a comparison of self-superiority, you must suppose some person with you<sup>2</sup>.'

'No, Sir,' he once said, 'people are not born with a particular genius for particular employments or studies, for it would be like saying that a man could see a great way east, but could not west<sup>3</sup>. It is good sense applied with diligence to what was at first a mere accident, and which, by great application, grew to be called, by the generality of mankind, a particular genius<sup>4</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> 'The true art of memory is the art of attention.' *Idler*, No. 74.

<sup>2</sup> 'Mr. Hobbes in his *Discourse of Human Nature* concludes thus:—"The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly; for men laugh at the follies of themselves past, when they come suddenly to remembrance, except they bring with them any present dishonour.' *The Spectator*, No. 47.

<sup>3</sup> 'JOHNSON. "I could as easily

apply to law as to tragick poetry." BOSWELL. "Yet, Sir, you did apply to tragick poetry, not to law." JOHNSON. "Because, Sir, I had not money to study law. Sir, the man who has vigour, may walk to the east, just as well as to the west, if he happens to turn his head that way." *Life*, v. 35.

Mr. Bryce in his *American Commonwealth* (2nd. ed. ii. 631) misquoting this passage says:—"Dr. Johnson thought that if he had taken to politics he would have been as distinguished therein as he was in poetry.'

<sup>4</sup> 'The true genius is a mind of Some

Some person advanced, that a lively imagination disqualified the mind from fixing steadily upon objects which required serious and minute investigation. JOHNSON. 'It is true, Sir, a vivacious quick imagination does sometimes give a confused idea of things, and which do not fix deep, though, at the same time, he has a capacity to fix them in his memory, if he would endeavour at it. It being like a man that, when he is running, does not make observations on what he meets with, and consequently is not impressed by them; but he has, nevertheless, the power of stopping and informing himself.'

A gentleman was mentioning it as a remark of an acquaintance of his, that he never knew but one person that was completely wicked<sup>1</sup>. JOHNSON. 'Sir, I don't know what you mean by a person completely wicked.' GENTLEMAN. 'Why, any one that has entirely got rid of all shame.' JOHNSON. 'How is he, then, completely wicked? He must get rid, too, of all conscience.' GENTLEMAN. 'I think conscience and shame the same thing.' JOHNSON. 'I am surprised to hear you say so; they spring from two different sources, and are distinct perceptions: one respects this world, the other the next<sup>2</sup>.' A LADY. 'I think, however, that a person who has got rid of shame is in a fair way to get rid of conscience.' JOHNSON. 'Yes, 'tis a part of

large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction.' *Works*, vii. 1. See *ante*, i. 314; ii. 264; and *Life*, ii. 436.

'I know of no such thing as genius,' said our Hogarth to Gilbert Cooper one day; 'genius is nothing but labour and diligence.' Seward's *Biographiana*, p. 293.

<sup>1</sup> 'I once knew (said Johnson) an old gentleman who was absolutely malignant. He really wished evil to others, and rejoiced at it.' *Life*, iii. 281.

<sup>2</sup> *Conscience*, Johnson defines as 'nothing more than a conviction felt by ourselves of something to be done, or something to be avoided.' *Ib.* ii. 243.

In his *Dictionary* he defines it as 'the knowledge or faculty by which we judge of the goodness or wickedness of ourselves.' *Shame* he defines as 'the passion felt when reputation is supposed to be lost.'

According to Northcote (*Life of Reynolds*, i. 230) the 'gentleman' was Reynolds, and the 'lady' Miss Reynolds. Sir Joshua said that 'he thought it was exactly the same'—being lost to all sense of shame, and being lost to all sense of conscience. "'What!'" said Johnson, "can you see no difference? I am ashamed to hear you or anybody utter such nonsense; when the one relates to men only; the other to God."

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the way, I grant; but there are degrees at which men stop, some for the fear of men, some for the fear of God: shame arises from the fear of men, conscience from the fear of God<sup>1</sup>.'

JOHNSON. 'The French, Sir, are a very silly People, they have no common life. Nothing but the two ends, Beggary and Nobility<sup>2</sup>.'

'Sir, they are made up in every thing of two extremes. They have no common sense, they have no common manners, no common learning, gross ignorance or *les belles lettres*<sup>3</sup>.'

A LADY. 'Indeed even in their dress, their friparry [*sic*] finery and their beggarly coarse linnen<sup>4</sup>. They had I thought no politeness. Their civilities never indicated more good-will than the talk of a Parrot, indiscriminately using the same set of superlative phrases as *à la merveille!* to every one alike. They really seem'd to have no expressions for sincerity and truth.'

JOHNSON. 'They are much behind-hand, stupid, ignorant creatures. At Fountainblue [*sic*] I saw a Horse-race<sup>5</sup>, everything was wrong, the heaviest weight was put upon the weakest Horse, and all the jockies wore the same colour coat.'

<sup>1</sup> 'It was chiefly respecting the opinion of the *Gentleman* that this dialogue appear'd memorable to the writer.' MISS REYNOLDS.

<sup>2</sup> 'Johnson observed, "The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably. There is no happy middle state as in England."' *Life*, ii. 402.

<sup>3</sup> In another version Miss Reynolds writes 'or *la metaphysique*.' The French, in this, were the opposite of the Scotch, 'whose learning is like bread in a besieged town; every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal.' *Life*, ii. 363. 'There is, perhaps, (said Johnson) more knowledge circulated in the French language than in any other. There is more original knowledge in English.' *Ib.* v. 310. Matthew Arnold describes 'the French literature of the eight-

eenth century' as 'one of the most powerful and pervasive intellectual agencies that have ever existed—the greatest European force of the eighteenth century.' *Essays in Criticism*, ed. 1889, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Carter wrote from Calais on June 4, 1763:—'In the market I saw such a mixture of rags and dirt and finery as was entirely new to an English spectator. The women at the stalls, who looked as if they were by no means possessed of anything like a shift, were decorated with long dangling earrings. . . . I am sorry to say it, but it is fact, that the Lion d'Argent at Calais is a much better inn than any I saw at Dover.' Mrs. Carter's *Memoirs*, i. 253.

<sup>5</sup> He does not mention this in his journal. *Life*, ii. 394.

GENTLEMAN. 'Had you any acquaintance in Paris?'

'No, I did not stay long enough to make any<sup>1</sup>. I spoke only latin, and I could not have much conversation. There is no good in letting the French have a superiority over you every word you speak<sup>2</sup>.

'Barreti [*sic*] was sometimes displeased with us for not liking the French.'

LADY. 'Perhaps he had a kind of partiality for that country, because it was in the way to Italy, and perhaps their manners resembled the Italians.'

JOHNSON. 'No. He was the showman, and we did not like his show; that was all the reason.'

From Mr. Barreti [*sic*]<sup>3</sup>.

A lady observed that Dr. Johnson had said that Madam De Bo—age [Du Bocage] was a poor creature.

BARRETI. 'Yes, because he hated her before he saw her, for the lady Mrs. Strickland<sup>4</sup>, who went with us from Diepe<sup>5</sup> to Paris, being introduced to Madam D—e (by a letter she carried) told her, that le grand Johnson, l'homme le plus savant de toute l'Angleterre, was come to Paris, and Mr. Barretti. "Oh Barretti, Barretti, that I have heard so much of, and that I have wish'd so much to see; bring me, bring me Baretti, je vous en prie," MRS. S—D. 'Et le grand Johnson aussi?'

M. D. 'Je ne me soucie de qui que ce soit d'autre, pourvu que vous m'amenez Barretti. Je lis actuellement son livre, son voyage d'Espagne, et je suis variment [*sic*] impatiente d'en connoitre l'Auteur<sup>6</sup>. Mais je vous prie de faire mes compliments à

<sup>1</sup> 'I was (he said) just beginning to creep into acquaintance.' *Life*, ii. 401.

<sup>2</sup> 'It was a maxim with Johnson that a man should not let himself down by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly.' *Ib.* ii. 404.

<sup>3</sup> In the next few lines Miss Reynolds spells Baretti's name in three different ways.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson described her as 'a Roman Catholick lady in Cumber-

land, a high lady.' *Life*, iii. 118. He mentions her in a letter to Mrs. Thrale. *Letters*, i. 401.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson crossed from Dover to Calais, but he visited Rouen on the way to Paris. I suppose he went along the coast to Dieppe.

<sup>6</sup> Of this book Johnson wrote:—'I know not whether the world has ever seen such Travels before.' *Letters*, i. 165.

tous, et à Madame Thrale en particulier. Je serai très aise de voir toute cette bonne compagnie.'

'Mrs. S—d on her return (continued Barretti) said something of Madame D—'s impatience to see me in Johnson's hearing; and finding her quite indifferent about him he took such an antipathy to her, that he went with reluctancy to visit her, and never could be prevailed upon to go a second time'; which perhaps was not to be wondered at, for the Ladies and Barretti on going one Day to drink tea with her, she happen'd to produce an old chaina [*sic*] teapot, which Mrs. S—d, who made the tea, could not make pour. 'Soufflez, soufflez, madame, dedans,' cry'd Madame D—e, 'il se rectifie immédiatement; essayez, je vous en prie.' The servant then thinking that Mrs. S—d did not understand what his lady said, took up the teapot to le rectifier, and Mrs. S—d had quite a struggle with him to get it from him; he was going to blow into the spout! Madame D—e all this while had not the least idea of its being any impropriety, and wonder'd at Mrs. S—d's stupidity. She came over to the table, caught up the tea-pot, and blew into the spout with all her might, then finding it pour, she held it up in tryumph [*sic*], and repeatedly exclaim'd, 'voilà, voilà, j'ai regagné l'honneur de ma Théière.' She had no sugar-tongs, and said something that shew'd she expected Mrs. S—d to use her fingers, to sweeten the cups. 'Madame je n'oserois.' 'Oh mon Dieu, quel grand quan quan les Anglois font de peu de chose'!

This however could not have prejudiced Dr. Johnson against the lady, for, as I apprehended Barretti, it happen'd a few days before they left Paris!

On telling Mr. Barretti of the proof that Johnson gave of the stupidity of the French, in the management of their Horse-

\* Miss Reynolds in one of her versions writes:—'Madame, Je ne ose pas.' 'Oh mon Dieu, quell grand ca les Anglois faire de peu de chose.' In another version her French is corrected in a different hand.

'JOHNSON. "At Madame —'s, a literary lady of rank, the footman took the sugar in his fingers and

threw it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside; but hearing it was made on purpose for me I e'en tasted Tom's fingers. The lady would needs make tea à l'Angloise. The spout of the tea-pot did not pour freely; she bad the footman blow into it.' *Life*, ii. 403.



Races, that all the Jockies wore the same colour coat dye he said 'that was like Johnson's remarks, he could not see.' But it was observed that he could enquire. 'Yes, it was by the answers he received that he was misled,' for he ask'd, 'what did the first jockey wear?' answer, 'Green.' 'What the second?' 'Green.' 'What the third?' 'Green;' which was true; but then the greens were all different greens, and very easily distinguish'd. Johnson was perpetually making mistakes; so, on going to Fountainblue [*sic*] when we were about three-fourths of the way, he exclaimed with amazement that now we were between Paris and the King of France's Court, and yet we had not mett [*sic*] one carriage coming from thense [*sic*], or seen one going thither! on which all the company in the coach burst out laughing, and immediately cry'd out, look, look, there is a coach gon [*sic*] by, there is a chariot, there is a post-chaise. I dare say we saw a hundred carriages at least, that were going to, or coming from, Fountainblue.'

It was mention'd with surprise to Mr. Barretti that Dr. Johnson should not have seen any Play but that one he saw at Fountainblue'. 'Oh yes, he was at two or three.' 'Indeed, he said he had not, and we know that he never tells an untruth.' B. 'Yes, I very well remember that he straddled over the Benches to come near some person, à la Comédie Française.'

Baretti on his return from France seem'd full of animosity against Johnson, merely, I believe, from a false conceit of his own importance.

[Here follows a narrative which has nothing to do with Johnson.]

I believe there never subsisted any cordial Friendship between Dr. Johnson and Barretti after their journey to Paris<sup>2</sup>; and what perhaps intirely extinguished it, was a most mendacious falsehood that he told Johnson of his having beaten Omai<sup>3</sup> at Chess, both times that he play'd with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, for the very reverse was true!

<sup>1</sup> Johnson recorded in his Journal:—  
'At night we went to a comedy. I  
neither saw nor heard.' *Life*, ii.  
394.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson wrote sarcastically of  
Baretti a few months before this  
journey. *Letters*, i. 350.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iii. 8.

'Do you think,' said he to Johnson, 'that I should be conquered at Chess by a savage?' 'I know you were,' says Johnson. Barretti insisting upon the contrary, Johnson rose from his seat in a most violent rage, 'I'll hear no more.' On which Barretti in a fright flew out of his House, and perhaps never entered it after. I believe he was never invited. This I was told by Mrs. Williams, who was present at their disputation.

Poor Mrs. Williams! Dr. Johnson seemed much to lament her loss 'as his companion for thirty years', and often express'd a very high opinion of her mental accomplishments. She was, he said, 'a very great woman.' I rather expected he would have honour'd her memory with a few elegiack lines, as he did her fellow Inmate, Dr. Levit [*sic*]<sup>2</sup>, a copy of which Dr. Johnson gave to me soon after he wrote them.

[Here followed Johnson's Letter to Sir Joseph Banks given in the *Life*, ii. 144.]

And I have also a desire to say something about the latin epitaph that Dr. Johnson composed for Parnel, because Mr. Boswell has said too little<sup>3</sup>, no blame to him, I imagine, for I suppose Dr. Johnson did not inform him that he produced it extempory one evening at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, in compliance with Dr. Goldsmith's request<sup>4</sup>. 'Pray, Sir, be so good as to write an epitaph for Dr. Parnell,' and almost immediately after, to the surprise of all present, he recited with solemn accent :—

Hic requiescit Thomas Parnel,  
Qui Sacerdos pariter et Poeta  
Utrasque partes ita implevit,  
Ut neque sacerdoti suavitas Poetae,  
Nec poetae sacerdotis sanctitas deesset.

<sup>1</sup> He wrote to Miss Reynolds on Oct. 1, 1783 :—'To my other afflictions is added solitude. Mrs. Williams, a companion of thirty years, is gone.' *Letters*, ii. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 137.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* iv. 54; v. 404.

<sup>4</sup> Goldsmith wrote a *Life of Parnell*, of which Johnson said :—'It is poor; not that it is poorly written, but that he had poor materials.' *Ib.* ii. 166.

Goldsmith in this work, lamenting the obscurity of the lives of men who become famous after death, finely says :—'When a poet's fame is increased by time, it is then too late to investigate the peculiarities of his disposition; the dews of the morning are past, and we vainly try to continue the chace by the meridian splendour.' *Misc. Works*, ed. 1801, iv. 3.

Every person that understood latin seem'd much pleased with it. But Dr. Goldsmith, for what reason I know not, paid him no compliment, and only said on hearing it, 'Ay, but this is in latin'. 'Tis in latin, to be sure,' reply'd Dr. Johnson. I do not remember what follow'd, but I could not forget the striking proof that Dr. Johnson gave of his abilities on this occasion, nor of Dr. Goldsmith's unwillingness to be pleased with it, apparently confused, and not knowing what to say. I did not hear him express any desire to have the epitaph in english, either before or after Dr. Johnson composed it. However he soon after wrote one himself in english, and it is, I believe, inscribed on Dr. Parnel's Tomb<sup>2</sup>.

That Mr. Boswell has sullied his very entertaining and most extraordinary work with his many acrimonious animadversions on the works, the talents, the conduct, &c. of the most respectable characters, must, I imagine, be allow'd by all who have read it, especially if they have remark'd that the evidence which he produces to substantiate his allegations rather prove their futility.

That many are repetitions of the words of another admits of no extenuation of his fault, but on the contrary, I think, doubly augment [*sic*] its turpitude.

[I here omit an unimportant passage.]

He has antedated [*sic*] the commencement of Sir Joshua Reynolds's acquaintance with Dr. Johnson by at least five years<sup>3</sup>, and has mistaken the place where they first met, with some other immaterial errors, respecting him and place, &c. The other erroneous date was March 28 [1776] which engaged my attention in consequence of Mr. Boswell's assertion that Mrs. and Miss Thrale set out for Bath in that Day, as it reminded me of a letter from Doctor Johnson that mention'd that incident; it is dated April

<sup>1</sup> For Johnson's contempt of English epitaphs for learned men, see *Life*, iii. 84; v. 154, 366.

<sup>2</sup> 'Parnell was buried in Trinity Church in Chester, without any monument to mark the place of his interment.' Goldsmith's *Misc. Works*, iv. 3. Mr. Forster, in his *Life of*

*Goldsmith*, makes no mention of this epitaph.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell places it in 1752. *Life*, i. 245, n. 1. Reynolds wrote, *ante*, ii. 219, that he had had 'thirty years' intimacy with Johnson,' which places it not later than 1754.

13, -76, in which he says *we are going to Bath this morning*. Such mistakes indeed are of little, or no importance<sup>1</sup>; but it is owing to a contrary supposition that I mention the following. I read the passage in Mr. Boswell's book relating to the dial plate of Dr. Johnson's watch with much surprise, and indeed concern. I was surprised to find that the inscription on it was in Greek, having heard from Dr. Johnson's own mouth that it was in Latin. I will not say that I read the words, it was so long since; but I believe I did, having his watch in my hand, when he repeated them to me, which he was shewing me in consequence of its being a new and valuable acquisition from Mr. Mudge<sup>2</sup>. They were, *Nox enim veniet*, and I was indeed concerned, for the honour of Dr. Johnson's character, which I thought not a little degraded by Mr. Boswell's assertion, that he had the plate taken out for fear it should be deemed ostentatious<sup>3</sup>. How Mr. Boswell could have supposed it to be consistent with Dr. Johnson's principles to have divested himself of a holy memento from the fear of what any man might think is very strange. Nor can I indeed conceive how it could be consistent with any man's principles, who at first had chosen such an inscription, to have been at all solicitous to discard it, as no one could inspect it without the concurrence of the owner, and less frequently did Dr. Johnson afford any person an opportunity of inspecting even the outside case of his watch than perhaps most men, being remarkably remiss in noticing the hour, even the

<sup>1</sup> The mistake is Miss Reynolds's, and shows the carelessness with which she read Boswell, who states that on March 28 Mrs. and Miss Thrale and Baretti went to Bath, and that Johnson soon after April 12 went there with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. *Life*, iii. 6, 44. Mrs. Thrale had in the interval returned to London, for she was at her own house on the 10th. *Ib.* p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> 'An artist of great reputation, not only in England but in foreign countries. The King of Spain had a watch of his making set in the head of his cane.' MISS REYNOLDS.

Miss Reynolds applies the word *artist* to a watchmaker. Her brother she would have called a *painter*. For Thomas Mudge, the watchmaker, see *ante*, ii. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell quotes Johnson's own words. 'He sometime afterwards laid aside this dial-plate; and when I asked him the reason, he said, "It might do very well upon a clock which a man keeps in his closet; but to have it upon his watch which he carries about with him, and which is often looked at by others, might be censured as ostentatious."' *Life*, ii. 57. See also *ante*, i. 123 n.

midnight hour! Besides its being in Greek heightened the improbability of Dr. Johnson's being so afraid of incurring the censure Mr. Boswell mentions; and I am happy to be able to contradict it; for soon after Dr. Johnson had shewn me the latin one, he told me that he had it taken out because he found that *enim* was not in the original<sup>1</sup>, which is only *The Night cometh*, a motive perfectly consonant with his character. I do not remember to have heard him say that the substitute was in the original Greek; hence my surprise on reading Mr. Boswell's assertion that it was. The identical watch to which he alluded was some years since in the possession of Mr. Steevens, but since his Decease I have never heard what was become of it<sup>2</sup>.

[The following Recollections by Miss Reynolds, which are not in the manuscript copies that I saw, are given by Mr. Croker. Croker's *Boswell*, 8vo. pp. 832-5.]

It will doubtless appear highly paradoxical to the generality of the world to say, that few men, in his ordinary disposition or common frame of mind, could be more inoffensive than Dr. Johnson; yet surely those who knew his uniform benevolence, and its actuating principles—steady virtue, and true holiness—will readily agree with me, that peace and good-will towards man were the natural emanations of his heart<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Venit nox quando nemo potest operari.' *St. John* ix. 4.

<sup>2</sup> It was the dial-plate and not the watch which was in the possession of Mr. Steevens. *Life*, ii. 57. For the watch see *ante*, ii. 81, and ii. 117 *n.*, where it is stated by Croker that the watch, which on Johnson's death came into the possession of his black servant, was sold by him to Canon Pailye. It is also asserted by R. Polwhele that B——, a Christ Church man, bought it of the same servant. Unless there is some mistake in one of these accounts, the Canon or the Christ Church man, it seems, was tricked. It would be interesting to know

whether there are in existence two watches said to be Johnson's.

<sup>3</sup> 'Johnson's roughness was only external, and did not proceed from the heart.' *Life*, ii. 362. 'He has nothing of the bear but his skin,' said Goldsmith. *Ib.* ii. 66. 'How very false is the notion which has gone round the world of the rough, and passionate, and harsh manners of this great and good man. . . . That he was occasionally remarkable for violence of temper may be granted; but let us ascertain the degree, and not let it be supposed that he was in a perpetual rage, and never without a club in his hand, to knock down every one who approached him. On

He

He always carried a religious treatise in his pocket on a Sunday<sup>1</sup>, and he used to encourage me to relate to him the particular parts of Scripture I did not understand, and to write them down as they occurred to me in reading the Bible.

One Sunday morning, as I was walking with him in Twickenham meadows, he began his antics both with his feet and hands, with the latter as if he was holding the reins of a horse like a jockey on full speed. But to describe the strange positions of his feet is a difficult task; sometimes he would make the back part of his heels to touch, sometimes his toes, as if he was aiming at making the form of a triangle, at least the two sides of one<sup>2</sup>. Though indeed, whether these were his gestures on this particular occasion in Twickenham meadows I do not recollect, it is so long since; but I well remember that they were so extraordinary that men, women, and children gathered round him, laughing. At last we sat down on some logs of wood by the river side, and they nearly dispersed; when he pulled out of his pocket Grotius *De Veritate Religionis*<sup>3</sup>, over which he seesawed at such a violent rate as to excite the curiosity of some people at a distance to come and see what was the matter with him.

As we were returning from the meadows that day, I remember we met Sir John Hawkins, whom Dr. Johnson seemed much

the contrary, the truth is, that by much the greatest part of his time he was civil, obliging, nay, polite in the true sense of the word.' *Life*, iii. 80. See also *ante*, i. 189.

He grew milder as he grew older. Miss Burney wrote in May:— 'Dr. Johnson was charming, both in spirits and humour. I really think he grows gayer and gayer daily, and more ductile and pleasant.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 23. Beattie, a week or two later, wrote:— 'Johnson grows in grace as he grows in years. He has contracted a gentleness of manner which pleases every body.' Beattie's *Life*, 1824, p. 289. Hannah More wrote in 1783:— 'Dr. Johnson is more mild and com-

placent than he used to be. I was struck with the mild radiance of this setting sun.' *Ante*, ii. 201.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps he did not always read in it. Boswell records how in the Sunday he spent in Edinburgh:— 'He took down Ogden's *Sermons on Prayer*, and retired with them to his room. He did not stay long, but soon joined us in the drawing-room.' *Life*, v. 29. The following Sunday at Aberdeen, 'he borrowed a volume of Massillon's *Discourses on the Psalms*: but I found he read little in it. Ogden too he sometimes took up, and glanced at; but threw it down again.' *Ib.* v. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 274, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 398, 454; *ante*, i. 157.

rejoiced

rejoiced to see; and no wonder, for I have often heard him speak of Sir John in terms expressive of great esteem and much cordiality of friendship<sup>1</sup>. On his asking Dr. Johnson when he had seen Dr. Hawkesworth, he roared out with great vehemency, 'Hawkesworth is grown a coxcomb, and I have done with him<sup>2</sup>.'

We drank tea that afternoon at Sir John Hawkins's, and on our return I was surprised to hear Dr. Johnson's minute criticism on Lady Hawkins's dress, with every part of which almost he found fault<sup>3</sup>.

Few people, I have heard him say, understood the art of carving better than himself; but that it would be highly indecorous in him to attempt it in company, being so near-sighted, that it required a suspension of his breath during the operation<sup>4</sup>.

It must be owned, indeed, that it was to be regretted that he did not practise a little of that delicacy in eating, for he appeared to want breath more at that time than usual. It is certain that he did not appear to the best advantage at the hour of repast<sup>5</sup>; but of this he was perfectly unconscious, owing probably to his being totally ignorant of the characteristic expressions of the human countenance<sup>6</sup>, and therefore he could have no conception that his own expressed when most pleased any thing displeasing to others; for though, when particularly directing his attention towards any object to spy out defects or perfections, he generally succeeded better than most men<sup>7</sup>; partly, perhaps, from a desire to excite admiration of his perspicacity, of which he was not a little ambitious—yet I have heard him say, and I have often

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 81. Hawkins lived at Twickenham.

<sup>2</sup> Malone says that 'Johnson was fond of him, but latterly owned that Hawkesworth—who had set out a modest, humble man—was one of the many whom success in the world had spoiled. He was latterly, as Sir Joshua Reynolds told me, an affected insincere man, and a great coxcomb in his dress. He had no literature whatever.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 441.

F. Greville, writing to Hume on

Sept. 24, 1764, quotes the opinion of 'my poor little inoffensive friend Hawkesworth.' *Hume MSS.*, Royal Society of Edinburgh. For what Boswell calls his 'provoking effrontery,' see *Life*, i. 253.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 337.

<sup>4</sup> According to Baretta Miss Williams, though blind, often carved. *Life*, ii. 99, n. 2. Boswell, who dined with Johnson more than once, does not mention who carved.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, ii. 105.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 457.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, i. 41.

perceived

perceived, that he could not distinguish any man's face half a yard distant from him, not even his most intimate acquaintance.

And yet Dr. Johnson's character, singular as it certainly was from the contrast of his mental endowments with the roughness of his manners, was, I believe, perfectly natural and consistent throughout; and to those who were intimately acquainted with him must, I imagine, have appeared so. For being totally devoid of all deceit, free from every tinge of affectation or ostentation<sup>1</sup>, and unwarping by any vice, his singularities, those strong lights and shades that so peculiarly distinguish his character, may the more easily be traced to their primary and natural causes.

The luminous parts of his character, his soft affections, and I should suppose his strong intellectual powers, at least the dignified charm or radiancy of them, must be allowed to owe their origin to his strict, his rigid principles of religion and virtue; and the shadowy parts of his character, his rough, unaccommodating manners, were in general to be ascribed to those corporeal defects that I have already observed naturally tended to darken his perceptions of what may be called propriety and impropriety in general conversation; and of course in the ceremonious or artificial sphere of society gave his deportment so contrasting an aspect to the apparent softness and general uniformity of cultivated manners.

And perhaps the joint influence of these two primeval causes, his intellectual excellence and his corporeal defects, mutually contributed to give his manners a greater degree of harshness than they would have had if only under the influence of one of them; the imperfect perceptions of the one not unfrequently producing misconceptions in the other.

Besides these, many other equally natural causes concurred to constitute the singularity of Dr. Johnson's character. Doubtless,

<sup>1</sup> 'He had an abhorrence of affectation. Talking of old Mr. Langton, of whom he said, "Sir, you will seldom see such a gentleman, such are his stores of literature, such his knowledge in divinity, and such his exemplary life;" he added, "and

Sir, he has no grimace, no gesticulation, no bursts of admiration on trivial occasions; he never embraces you with an overacted cordiality.'" *Life*, iv. 27. See *ib.* i. 470 for Johnson's disapproval of 'studied behaviour.'



the progress of his education had a double tendency to brighten and to obscure it. But I must observe, that this obscurity (implying only his awkward uncouth appearance, his ignorance of the rules of politeness, &c.) would have gradually disappeared at a more advanced period, at least could have had no manner of influence to the prejudice of Dr. Johnson's character, had it not been associated with those corporeal defects above mentioned. But, unhappily, his untaught, uncivilized manner seemed to render every little indecorum or impropriety that he committed doubly indecorous and improper.

## ANECDOTES

BY WILLIAM SEWARD, F.R.S.<sup>1</sup>

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OF music Dr. Johnson used to say that it was the only sensual pleasure without vice<sup>2</sup>. *European Magazine*, 1795, p. 82.

Dr. Johnson was extremely averse to the present foppish mode of educating children, so as to make them what foolish mothers call 'elegant young men.' He said to some lady who asked him what she should teach her son in early life, 'Madam, to read, to write, to count; grammar, writing, and arithmetic; three things which, if not taught in very early life, are seldom or ever taught to any purpose, and without the knowledge of which no superstructure of learning or of knowledge can be built<sup>3</sup>.' *Ib.* p. 186.

The Doctor used to say that he once knew a man of so vagabond a disposition, that he even wished, for the sake of change of place, to go to the West Indies. He set off on this expedition, and the Doctor saw him in town four months

<sup>1</sup> These anecdotes are collected from the *European Magazine*, Seward's *Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons*, and his *Biographiana*.

Boswell owns his obligation to him 'for several communications.' *Life*, iii. 123. For an account of him, see *ib.* n. 1; and *Letters*, i. 346, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson here uses *sensual* in the sense that he gives it in his first and

second definitions, as 'affecting the senses' or 'pleasing to the senses,' and not in the more limited sense which it now bears. For his feelings towards music, see *ante*, ii. 103.

<sup>3</sup> 'I hate by-roads in education. Education is as well known, and has long been as well known as ever it can be.' *Life*, ii. 407.

For arithmetic, see *ante*, i. 281, 295. afterwards

afterwards. Upon asking him, why he had not put his plan in execution, he replied, 'I have been returned these ten days from the West Indies. The sight of slavery was so horrid to me, that I could only stay two days in one of the islands'.<sup>1</sup> This man, who had been once a man of literature, and a private tutor to some young men of consequence, became so extremely torpid and careless in point of further information, that the Doctor, when he called upon him one day, and asked him to lend him a book, was told by him, that he had not one in the house.

Dr. Johnson, on learning the death of a celebrated West India Planter<sup>2</sup>, said, 'He is gone, I believe, to a climate in which he will not find the country much warmer and the men much blacker than that he has left.' *Ib.* p. 186.

Johnson was much pleased with a French expression made use of by a lady towards a person whose head was confused with a multitude of knowledge, at which he had not arrived in a regular and principled way,—*il a bâti sans échafaud*,—'he has built without his scaffold.'

He was once told that a friend of his, who had long lived in London, was about to quit it, to retire into the country, as being tired of London. 'Say rather, Sir,' said Johnson, 'that he is tired of life'.<sup>3</sup> *European Magazine*, 1797, p. 418.

Dr. Johnson said that he should be much pleased to write the Life of that man [Bacon], from whose writings alone a Dictionary of the English Language might be compiled<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson described Jamaica as 'a place of great wealth and dreadful wickedness, a den of tyrants and a dungeon of slaves.' *Life*, ii. 478.

<sup>2</sup> 'Great merit,' wrote Franklin, 'is assumed for the gentlemen of the West-Indies, on the score of their residing and spending their money in England.' Franklin's *Works*, ed. 1887, iii. 105.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps Alderman Beckford. *Life*, iii. 76, 201. See *ante*, i. 211, where he is reported to have said 'of

a Jamaica gentleman, then lately dead: "He will not, whither he is now gone, find much difference, I believe, either in the climate or the company."'

<sup>4</sup> 'No, Sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.' *Life*, iii. 178. Charles Lamb, writing to Wordsworth, speaks of 'the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street.' Lamb's *Letters*, i. 165.

<sup>5</sup> For my note on this, see *Life*, iii. 194, n. 2. See also *ante*, ii. 229.

He was one day in company with a very talkative lady, of whom he appeared to take very little notice. 'Why, Doctor, I believe you prefer the company of men to that of the ladies.' 'Madam,' replied he, 'I am very fond of the company of ladies; I like their beauty, I like their delicacy, I like their vivacity, and I like their *silence*.' *European Magazine*, 1798, p. 92.

Johnson the day before he died was visited by Dr. Burney. After having taken an affectionate leave of his old friend he said, taking his hands between his, 'My good friend, do all the good you can<sup>1</sup>.'

'You are my model, Sir,' said he to Dr. Burney, soon after he published his *Tour to the Hebrides*. 'I had that clever dog Burney's Musical Tour<sup>2</sup> in my eye,' said he to many friends on the same occasion. *Ib.*, p. 241.

A friend of Johnson, an indolent man, succeeding to a moderate sum of money on the death of his father, asked the Doctor how he should lay it out. 'Half on mortgage,' said he, 'and half in the funds: you have then,' continued he, 'the two best securities for it that your country can afford. Take care, however, of the character of the person to whom you lend it on mortgage; see that he is a man of exactness and regularity, and lives within his income. The money in the funds you are sure of at every emergency; it is always at hand, and may be resorted to on every occasion<sup>3</sup>.' *Ib.*, p. 302.

<sup>1</sup> For a somewhat different version of this anecdote, see *Life*, iv. 410, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 1 vol. 1771, and *The Present State of Music in Germany, &c.*, 2 vols. 1773. *Life*, iv. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Johnson said: 'It is better to have five *per cent.* out of land than out of money, because it is more secure; but the readiness of transfer and promptness of interest make many people rather choose the funds.' *Life*, iv. 164. In a note on Falstaff's words, 'You may buy land now as

cheap as stinking mackerel,' Johnson writes:—'In former times the prosperity of the nation was known by the value of land, as now by the price of stocks. Before Henry the Seventh made it safe to serve the king regnant, it was the practice at every revolution for the conqueror to confiscate the estates of those that opposed, and perhaps of those who did not assist him. Those, therefore, that foresaw a change of Government, and thought their estates in danger, were desirous to sell them in haste for something that might be carried away.' Johnson's *Shakespeare*, ed. 1765, iv. 165.

Dr. Johnson used to tell his friends that from time immemorial a convict of the parish of St. Giles in the Fields had the privilege of the right hand in the cart. *Ib.*, p. 303.

Dr. Johnson one day observing a friend of his packing up the two volumes of *Observations on Man*, written by this great and good man (Hartley) to take into the country, said, 'Sir, you do right to take Dr. Hartley with you.' Dr. Priestley said of him, 'that he had learned more from Hartley, than from any book he had ever read, except the Bible'.<sup>1</sup>

Johnson used to say of the Duc de Rochefoucault that he was one of the few *gentlemen* writers of whom authors by *profession* had occasion to be afraid<sup>2</sup>. *European Magazine*, 1798, p. 374.

Dr. Johnson said that Busby used to declare that his rod was his sieve, and that whoever could not pass through that was no boy for him<sup>3</sup>. He early discovered the genius of Dr. South, lurking perhaps under idleness and obstinacy. 'I see

<sup>1</sup> Hartley is not, I think, mentioned in any of Johnson's writings or in Boswell. Priestley, in his *Autobiography*, ed. 1810, p. 12, says of Hartley's *Observations on Man*:— 'It produced the greatest, and in my opinion, the most favourable effect on my general turn of thinking through life.'

If Johnson had heard Seward supporting Hartley's fame by Priestley's praise, he would have knit his brows, and in a stern manner enquired, "Why do we hear so much of Dr. Priestley?" *Life*, iv. 238.

'It is known to most literary people that Coleridge was, in early life, so passionate an admirer of the Hartleian philosophy, that "Hartley" was the sole baptismal name which he gave to his eldest child; and in an early poem entitled *Religious Musings* he has characterized Hartley as

"Him of mortal kind  
Wisest, him first who marked the  
ideal tribes

Up the fine fibres through the  
sentient brain

Pass in fine surges."

But at present (August, 1807) all this was a forgotten thing. Coleridge was so profoundly ashamed of the shallow Unitarianism of Hartley, and so disgusted to think that he could at any time have countenanced that creed, that he would scarcely allow to Hartley the reverence which is undoubtedly his due.' De Quincey's *Works*, ed. 1863, ii. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of the Earl of Carlisle's *Poems*, Johnson said 'that when a man of rank appeared in that character [as a candidate for literary fame,] he deserved to have his merit handsomely allowed.' *Life*, iv. 114.

<sup>3</sup> 'As we stood before Busby's tomb the Knight [Sir Roger de Cover-  
said

(said he) great talents in that sulky boy, and I shall endeavour to bring them out.' Seward's *Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons*, ii. 50.

Dr. Johnson always supposed that Mr. Richardson had Mr. Nelson<sup>1</sup> in his thoughts, when he delineated the character of Sir Charles Grandison. *Ib.* ii. 91.

A friend of Dr. Johnson asked him one day, whose sermons were the best in the English language. 'Why, Sir, bating a little heresy those of Dr. Samuel Clarke.' This great and excellent man had indeed good reason for thus highly praising them, as he told a relation of Dr. Clarke they made him a Christian<sup>3</sup>.

In his opinion Clarke was the most complete literary character that England ever produced. *Ib.* ii. 313.

The late Lord North told Dr. Johnson<sup>4</sup> that Sir Robert Walpole had once got possession of some treasonable letters of Mr. Shippen, and that he sent for him, shewed him the letters, and burnt them before his face. Soon afterwards it

ley] uttered himself again after the same manner, "Dr. Busby, a great man! he whipped my grandfather; a very great man! I should have gone to him myself, if I had not been a blockhead; a very great man!" *The Spectator*, No. 329.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Nelson, the author of *Festivals and Fasts*. *Ante*, i. 221 n.

<sup>2</sup> For Clarke's heresy see *ante*, i. 38, and for Queen Caroline's wish to make him a bishop see *Life*, iii. 248 n. Dean Church, writing of Handel's *Te Deum*, as performed in St. Paul's at the Queen's Jubilee, says:—"I noticed one thing which perhaps is an over-refinement. The least striking bit is the rendering of the verses concerning the Three Persons—"The Father—Thine honourable, true, and only Son—Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." It is not dwelt on, but run through—

almost rushed through, as if it were almost only one verse. Well, when Handel wrote was just the time when Queen Caroline, wife of George II, was supposed to be countenancing the people who took the wrong side in the great Trinitarian controversy then raging. It would be curious, if that influenced a composition which, of course, would be talked about in the court of the hero of Dettingen, 1743.' *Life and Letters of Dean Church*, p. 392.

<sup>3</sup> For the effect of Law's *Serious Call to a Holy Life* on his mind, see *Life*, i. 68.

<sup>4</sup> 'I had once some business to do for government, and I went to Lord North's. Precaution was taken that it should not be known. It was dark before I went; yet a few days after I was told, "Well, you have been with Lord North." *Ib.* v. 248.

was necessary in a new parliament for Mr. Shippen to take the oaths of allegiance to George II, when Sir Robert placed himself over against him and smiled whilst he was sworn by the Clerk. Mr. Shippen then came up to him and said 'Indeed, Robin, this is hardly fair <sup>1</sup>.' *Ib.* ii. 335.

In a conversation with Dr. Johnson on the subject of the Duc de Montmorenci he said: 'Had I been Richelieu, I could not have found it in my heart to have suffered the first Christian baron to die by the hands of the executioner <sup>2</sup>.' *Ib.* iii. 224.

Dr. Johnson used to think Voltaire's *Life of Charles XII of Sweden* one of the finest pieces of historical writing in any language<sup>3</sup>. *Ib.* iv. 161.

Dr. Johnson said that he had been told by an acquaintance of Sir Isaac Newton, that in early life he started as a clamorous infidel; but that, as he became more informed on the subject, he was converted to Christianity, and became one of its most zealous defenders<sup>4</sup>. *Supplement to Seward's Anecdotes*, p. 98.

Dr. Johnson used to advise his friends to be upon their guard against romantic virtue, as being founded upon no settled principle. 'A plank,' added he, 'that is tilted up at one end must of course fall down on the other.'

<sup>1</sup> 'I love to pour out all myself as plain  
As downright Shippen, or as old  
Montaigne.'

Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, Bk.  
ii. Sat. 1, l. 51.

<sup>2</sup> 'Shippen and Sir Robert Walpole (writes Coxe) had always a personal regard for each other. He was frequently heard to say, "Robin and I are two honest men. He is for King George and I for King James, but those men with long cravats (meaning Sandys, Sir John Rushout, Gybbon, and others) only desire places, either under King George or King James!"' Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, ed. 1798. i. 672.

<sup>3</sup> 'Son supplice fut juste, si celui de Marillac ne l'avait pas été: mais la mort d'un homme de si grande espérance, qui avait gagné des batailles, et que son extrême valeur, sa générosité, ses grâces avaient rendu cher à toute la France, rendit le Cardinal plus odieux que n'avait fait la mort de Marillac.' *Œuvres de Voltaire*, ed. 1819, xvi. 101.

<sup>4</sup> 'I admire no historians much except Herodotus, Thucydides, and Tacitus. . . . There is merit, no doubt, in Hume, Robertson, Voltaire, and Gibbon. Yet it is not the thing.' Macaulay's *Life*, ed. 1877, ii. 270.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, i. 455.

In a conversation with the Duc de Chaulnes<sup>1</sup>, the duke said to Johnson, 'that the morality of the different religions existing in the world was nearly the same.' 'But you must acknowledge, my lord,' said the Doctor, 'that the Christian religion alone puts it upon its proper basis—the fear and love of God.' *Ib.* p. 149.

Of Mrs. Montagu's elegant 'Essay upon Shakspeare,' he always said, 'that it was *ad hominem*, that it was conclusive against Voltaire; and that she had done what she intended to do<sup>2</sup>.'

Johnson's Preface to his edition of Shakspeare was styled by Dr. Adam Smith, the most manly piece of criticism that was ever published in any country<sup>3</sup>. *Ib.* p. 151.

Dr. Johnson used to apply to Lord Chatham Corneille's celebrated lines to the Cardinal de Richelieu<sup>4</sup>. During the American War he used to exclaim, 'Make Lord Chatham Dictator for six months, and we shall hear no more of these Rebels<sup>5</sup>.' *Ib.* p. 152.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, ii. 362, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 'JOHNSON. "Sir, I will venture to say, there is not one sentence of true criticism in her book." GARRICK. "But, Sir, surely it shews how much Voltaire has mistaken Shakspeare, which nobody else has done." JOHNSON. "Sir, nobody else has thought it worth while. And what merit is there in that? You may as well praise a schoolmaster for whipping a boy who has construed ill." *Life*, ii. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Smith reviewed the Dictionary in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1755, No. 1. *Life*, i. 298, n. 2. See *post* under ADAM SMITH ON DR. JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> 'Qu'on parle mal ou bien du fameux Cardinal,  
Ma prose ni mes vers n'en  
diront jamais rien :  
Il m'a fait trop de bien pour  
en dire du mal,

Il m'a fait trop de mal pour  
en dire du bien.'

Johnson wrote of Chatham:—'For whom it will be happy if the nation shall at last dismiss him to nameless obscurity, with that equipoise of blame and praise which Corneille allows to Richelieu.' *Works*, vi. 197.

For his violent attack on Chatham, see *Life*, ii. 314. In 1778 he said to Boswell:—'Lord Chatham was a Dictator; he possessed the power of putting the State in motion; now there is no power, all order is relaxed.' *Ib.* iii. 356.

<sup>5</sup> 'You talk, my Lords, of conquering America; of your numerous friends there to annihilate the Congress, and your powerful forces to disperse her army. I might as well talk of driving them before me with this crutch.' Lord Chatham, quoted in Seward's *Anecdotes*, iii. 389.



Dr. Johnson was observed by a musical friend of his to be extremely inattentive at a concert, whilst a celebrated solo player was running up the divisions and subdivisions of notes upon his violin. His friend, to induce him to take greater notice of what was going on, told him how extremely difficult it was. 'Difficult do you call it, Sir?' replied the Doctor; 'I wish it were impossible'.<sup>1</sup> *Ib.* p. 267.

Dr. Johnson told Voltaire's antagonist Fréron, that *vir erat acerrimi ingenii ac paucarum literarum*<sup>2</sup>; and Bishop Warburton says of him, 'that he writes indifferently well upon every thing'.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 274.

To some one who was complaining of his want of memory Johnson said, 'Pray, Sir, do you ever forget what money you are worth, or who gave you the last kick on your shins that you had? Now, if you would pay the same attention to what you read as you do to your temporal concerns and your bodily feelings, you would impress it as deeply in your memory'.<sup>4</sup> Seward's *Biographiana*, p. 58.

Dr. Johnson said one day, in talking of the difference between English and Scotch education, 'that if from the first he did not come out a scholar, he was fit for nothing at all; whereas (added he) in the last a boy is always taught something that may be of use to him; and he who is not able to read a page of Tully will

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, ii. 409; *ante*, ii. 103.

<sup>2</sup> 'La musique aujourd'hui n'est plus que l'art de exécuter des choses difficiles, et ce qui n'est que difficile ne plaît point à la longue.' *Candide*, ch. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 406. Johnson recorded at Paris on Oct. 14, 1775:—'In the afternoon I visited Mr. Fréron the journalist. He spoke Latin very scantily, but seemed to understand me.' *Ib.* p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> 'Johnson's culture is wholly English; that not of a Thinker but of a "Scholar": his interests are wholly English; he sees and knows nothing but England; he is the John Bull of

Spiritual Europe: let him live, love him, as he was and could not but be! Pitiably it is, no doubt, that a Samuel Johnson . . . should see nothing in the great Frederick but "Voltaire's lackey;" in Voltaire himself but a man *acerrimi ingenii, paucarum literarum*.' Carlyle's *Misc. Works*, n.d. iii. 102.

<sup>5</sup> In a letter to Hurd, Warburton says, 'Voltaire has fine parts and is a real genius.' *Letters from a late Eminent Prelate*, 1st ed. p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> 'The true art of memory is the art of attention.' *The Idler*, No. 74. See *Life*, iii. 191; v. 68.

be able to become a surveyor, or to lay out a garden'.<sup>1</sup> *Ib.* p. 197.

Sir Robert Walpole's general principle as a minister was '*Quieta non movere*, to let well alone.' This made Dr. Johnson say of him, 'He was the best minister this country ever had; as if *we* would have let him (he speaks of his own violent faction) he would have kept the country in perpetual peace'.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 554.

'What is written without effort (said Dr. Johnson) is in general read without pleasure.' *Ib.* p. 260.

Dr. Johnson was of opinion that the happiest, as well as the most virtuous, persons were to be found amongst those who united with a business or profession a love of literature<sup>3</sup>.

He was constantly earnest with his friends, when they had thoughts of marriage, to look out for a religious wife<sup>4</sup>. 'A principle of honour or fear of the world,' added he, 'will many times keep a man in decent order, but when a woman loses her religion, she, in general, loses the only tie that will restrain her actions. Plautus, in his *Amphytrio*<sup>5</sup>, makes Alcmena say beautifully to her husband—

'Non ego illam mihi dotem duco esse, quae dos dicitur,  
Sed pudicitiam, et pudorem, et sedatum cupidinem,  
Deum metum, parentum amorem, et cognatum concordiam;  
Tibi morigera, atque ut munifica sim bonis, prosim probis.'

*Ib.* p. 599.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, ii. 363; *ante*, ii. 48.

<sup>2</sup> For Johnson's attacks on Walpole, see *Life*, i. 129, 141. 'Walpole's name,' says Smollett describing the last years of his ministry, 'was seldom or never mentioned with decency, except by his own dependents.' *Hist. of England*, iii. 46. In 1773 'Johnson called Mr. Pitt a meteor; Sir Robert Walpole a fixed star.' *Life*, v. 339.

Horace Walpole wrote on March

26, 1771 :—'One always prefers the wisdom of one's own age. My father's maxim, *Quieta non movere*, was very well in those ignorant days. The science of government is better understood now—so, to be sure, *whatever is, is right*.' Walpole's *Letters*, v. 292.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 238 n.; ii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, ii. 76.

<sup>5</sup> Act ii. sc. 2, l. 209.

He was one day asked by Mr. Cator<sup>1</sup> what the Opposition meant by their flaming speeches and violent pamphlets against Lord North's administration. 'They mean, Sir, rebellion,' said he, 'they mean in spite to destroy that country which they are not permitted to govern.'<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 600.

Mrs. Cotterell<sup>3</sup> having one day asked him to introduce her to a celebrated writer; 'Dearest Madam,' replied he, 'you had better let it alone; the best part of every author is in general to be found in his book.'<sup>4</sup> This idea he has dilated with his usual perspicuity and illustrated by one of the most appropriate similes in the English language:—A transition from an author's book to his conversation is too often like an entrance into a large city after a distant prospect: remotely, we see nothing but spires of temples, and turrets of palaces, and imagine it the residence of splendour, grandeur, and magnificence; but when we have passed the gates we find it perplexed with narrow passages, disgraced with despicable cottages, embarrassed with obstructions, and clouded with smoke<sup>5</sup>. *Ib.* p. 600.

The learned and excellent Charles Cole<sup>6</sup> having once mentioned to him a book lately published on the Sacrament<sup>7</sup>, he replied, 'Sir, I look upon the Sacrament as the palladium of religion; I hope that no profane hands will venture to touch it.' *Ib.* p. 601.

On being asked in his last illness what physician he had sent

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 349 n.; *Life*, iv. 313.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson said to Boswell in 1781:—'Between ourselves, Sir, I do not like to give opposition the satisfaction of knowing how much I disapprove of the ministry.' *Life*, iv. 100. For his contempt of it, see also *ib.* iii. 46, 356; iv. 81, 139; *ante*, i. 104.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, ii. 393.

<sup>4</sup> 'Admiration begins where acquaintance ceases.' *Rambler*, No. 77.

Rousseau, in *Emile*, speaking of

Paris, says:—'Ceux qui pensent qu'il suffit de lire les livres qui s'y font se trompent; on apprend beaucoup plus dans la conversation des auteurs que dans leurs livres.' *Œuvres*, ed. 1782, ix. 238.

<sup>5</sup> *Rambler*, No. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps Charles Nalson Cole, who edited Soame Jenyns's *Works*, 1790.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the book mentioned in Johnson's *Letters*, ii. 204.

for,—‘Dr. Heberden,’ replied he, ‘*ultimum Romanorum*’, the last of the learned physicians.’ *Ib.* p. 601.

[The three following anecdotes attributed to Seward in Croker’s *Boswell*, ix. 255, I have failed to trace.]

Another admonition of his was, never to go out without some little book or other in their pocket. ‘Much time,’ added he ‘is lost by waiting, by travelling, &c., and this may be prevented, by making use of every possible opportunity for improvement’<sup>2</sup>.

‘The knowledge of various languages,’ said he, ‘may be kept up by occasionally using bibles and prayer-books in them at church.’

Sir Joshua Reynolds in his picture of the Infant Hercules, painted for the Empress of Russia, in the person of Tiresias the soothsayer, gave an adumbration of Johnson’s manner<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Thou last of all the Romans,  
fare thee well.’

*Julius Caesar*, Act v. sc. 3, l. 99.  
See *Letters*, ii. 95 n.; *ante*, ii. 154 n.

<sup>3</sup> On his way to Harwich ‘he had in his pocket *Pomponius Mela de Situ Orbis*, which he read occasionally.’ *Life*, i. 465.

<sup>3</sup> ‘The subject he had chosen in allusion to the power of Russia, then in its infancy.... I have heard Mr. Rogers say that Reynolds, who was always thinking of his art, was one day walking near Beaconsfield, when he met a fine rosy little peasant boy—a son of Burke’s bailiff. Reynolds patted him on the head, and,

after looking earnestly in his face, said:—“I must give more colour to my Infant Hercules.”’ Leslie and Taylor’s *Reynolds*, ii. 483.

‘Reynolds himself, on taking leave of it, previous to its departure for Russia, said:—“there were ten pictures under it, some better, some worse.”’ Northcote’s *Reynolds*, ii. 219.

‘Mr. Walpole suggested to Sir Joshua [for his picture for the Empress] the scene Deptford, and the time when the Czar Peter was receiving a ship-carpenter’s dress, in exchange for his own, to work in the dock.’ H. More’s *Memoirs*, ii. 21.

## ANECDOTES BY GEORGE STEEVENS

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[PUBLISHED in the *European Magazine*, January, 1785, p. 51, under the title of *Johnsoniana*. The editor says by way of introduction:—‘Of the various anecdotes of Dr. Johnson which have been given to the Public Papers we select the present collection, as we have every reason to rely on their authenticity.’

‘These anecdotes were contributed by Steevens himself, and if they are not altogether fictitious, their language is coloured by their brutality.’ W. P. COURTNEY, *Dict. Nat. Biog.* xi. 371. One or two of them which are told by Boswell I have omitted. *Life*, iv. 324. For Steevens’s malignancy and untruthfulness see *ib.* iii. 281; iv. 178, *n.* 1.]

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I HAVE been told, Dr. Johnson, says a friend, that your translation of Pope’s *Messiah* was made either as a common exercise, or as an imposition for some negligence you had been guilty of at College<sup>1</sup>. ‘No, Sir,’ replied the Doctor. ‘At Pembroke the former were always in prose<sup>2</sup>, and to the latter<sup>3</sup> I would not have submitted. I wrote it rather to shew the tutors what I could do, than what I was willing should be done. It answered

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins (p. 13) states that it was imposed on him on account of his ‘absenting himself from early prayers.’ According to Boswell he was asked by his tutor to do it as a Christmas exercise. *Life*, i. 61.

<sup>2</sup> For one of Johnson’s exercises in prose see *ib.* i. 60, *n.* 7.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Johnson never used the phrases *the former* and *the latter*.’ *Id.* iv. 190.

my purpose; for it convinced those who were well enough inclined to punish me, that I could wield a scholar's weapon as often as I was menaced with arbitrary inflictions. Before the frequency of personal satire had weakened its effect, the petty Tyrants of Colleges<sup>1</sup> stood in awe of a pointed remark, or a vindictive epigram. But since every man in his turn has been wounded, no man is ashamed of a scar.'

'I wrote (said Johnson) the first seventy lines in the *Vanity of Human Wishes* in the course of one morning, in that small house beyond the church [at Hampstead]<sup>2</sup>. The whole number was

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the Pembroke buttery-book of Johnson's time I found scribbled, probably by a servitor:—'Nothing is so imperious as a Fellow of a college upon his own dunghill, nothing so contemptible abroad.'

Bentham entered Queen's College, Oxford, at the age of twelve. 'His tutor was a morose and gloomy personage, sour and repulsive—a sort of Protestant monk. His only anxiety about his pupil was to prevent his having any amusement.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 37.

John James, who was at Queen's College in 1778, writing of those on the Foundation says:—'The more I see of it, the more do I felicitate myself that I did not enter upon it. I could not bear to be so brow-beaten.' 'There is,' he says, 'such an uncharitableness in the manners of a college, such an unsociable reserve, and disregard of each other's welfare, that I never can think of them without growing out of humour with all about me.' *Letters of Radcliffe and James*, pp. 56, 85.

Vicesimus Knox wrote in 1781:—'The principal thing required is external respect from the juniors. However ignorant or unworthy a senior fellow may be, yet the slightest

disrespect is treated as the greatest crime of which an academic can be guilty.' Knox's *Works*, iv. 201.

The gentlemen-commoners, to judge from Gibbon's account, were not exposed to any of this tyranny. The servitors suffered from it most. The commoners, among whom was Johnson, would have had less to feel.

An undergraduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, of Bentley's time, in his *Imitation of an Ode of Horace* (iii. 2), says of the student:—

'With want and rigid College laws

Let him inur'd betimes comply.'

Monk's *Bentley*, ii. 173.

<sup>2</sup> 'Mrs. Johnson, for the sake of country air, had lodgings at Hampstead, to which he resorted occasionally, and there the greatest part, if not the whole, of this *Imitation* was written.' *Life*, i. 192. 'I wrote (he said) a hundred lines of it in a day.' *Ib.* ii. 15.

'Park says the house at which Johnson used to lodge was the last house in Frognal, southward, occupied in Park's time by B. C. Stephenson, Esq.' Hewitt's *Northern Heights of London*, ed. 1869, p. 243.

Steevens lived at Hampstead. By enclosing 'at Hampstead' in brackets composed

composed before I threw a single couplet on paper. The same method I pursued in regard to the Prologue on opening Drury-Lane Theatre. I did not afterwards change more than a word in it, and that was done at the remonstrance of Garrick. I did not think his criticism just; but it was necessary he should be satisfied with what he was to utter<sup>1</sup>.

To a Gentleman who expressed himself in disrespectful terms of Blackmore<sup>2</sup>, one of whose poetic bulls he happened just then to recollect, Dr. Johnson answered, 'I hope a blunder, after you have heard what I shall relate, will not be reckoned decisive against a poet's reputation. When I was a young man, I translated Addison's Latin poem on the *Battle of the Cranes and Pygmies*, and must plead guilty to the following couplet:—

'Down from the guardian boughs the nests they flung,  
And *kill'd* the yet *unanimated* young<sup>3</sup>:'

And yet, I trust, I am no blockhead.—I afterwards changed the the word *kill'd* into *crush'd*.

When Dr. Percy first published his Collection of Ancient English Ballads, perhaps he was too lavish in commendation of the beautiful simplicity and poetic merit he supposed himself to discover in them. This circumstance provoked Johnson to observe one evening at Miss Reynolds's tea table. that he could rhyme as well, and as elegantly, in common narrative and conversation<sup>4</sup>. For instance, says he,

he apparently wishes to show that it was there that Johnson told him this fact.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 181. See *ante*, ii. 6 n.

<sup>2</sup> 'I defended Blackmore's supposed lines, which have been ridiculed as absolute nonsense:—

"A painted vest Prince Voltiger  
had on,  
Which from a naked Pict his  
grandsire won."

*Life*, ii. 108.

<sup>3</sup> 'Blackmore, by the unremitted

enmity of the wits whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dulness, has been exposed to worse treatment than he deserved.' *Works*, viii. 49. For Locke's admiration of Blackmore see Warton's Pope's *Works*, ed. 1822, iv. 62 n.

<sup>3</sup> 'Omnia vastaret miles, foetusque  
necaret  
'Immeritos, vitamque abrumperet  
imperfectam.'

Addison's *Works*, ed. 1862, i. 240.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, ii. 212; iii. 158.

As with my hat upon my head  
I walk'd along the Strand,  
I there did meet another man  
With his hat in his hand.

Or to render such poetry subservient to my own immediate use,

I therefore pray thee, Renny<sup>1</sup> dear,  
That thou wilt give to me,  
With cream and sugar soften'd well,  
Another dish of tea.

Nor fear that I, my gentle maid,  
Shall long detain the cup,  
When once unto the bottom I  
Have drunk the liquor up.

Yet hear, alas! this mournful truth,  
Nor hear it with a frown;—  
Thou canst not make the tea so fast  
As I can gulp it down.

And thus he proceeded through several more stanzas, till the Reverend Critic cried out for quarter.

'Pray,' said Garrick's mother to Johnson, 'What is your opinion of my son David?' 'Why, Madam,' replied the Doctor, 'David will either be hanged, or become a great man<sup>2</sup>.'

When Bolingbroke died, and bequeathed the publication of his works to Mallet, Johnson observed:—'His Lordship has loaded a blunderbuss against Religion, and has left a Scoundrel to pull the trigger<sup>3</sup>.' Being reminded of this a few years ago, the Doctor exclaimed, 'Did I really say so?' 'Yes, Sir.' He replied, 'I am heartily glad of it.'

'You knew Mr. Capell<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Johnson?' 'Yes, Sir; I have seen

<sup>1</sup> For Johnson's abbreviations of names see *Life*, ii. 258.

<sup>2</sup> Garrick was a pupil of Johnson's academy at Edial. *Ante*, ii. 237.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 268; *ante*, i. 408.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Capell. 'Of the Preface to Capell's *Shakespeare*, Dr. Johnson said:—"If the man would have come to me, I would have endeavoured to endow his purposes with words; for,

as it is, he doth gabble monstrously.'" *Life*, iv. 5.

'Defects of style apart, this preface was by far the most valuable contribution to Shakespearian criticism that had yet appeared, and the text was based upon a most searching collation of all the Folios and of all the Quartos known to exist at that time. . . . His unequalled zeal and in-

him



him at Garrick's.' 'And what think you of his abilities?' 'They are just sufficient, Sir, to enable him to select the black hairs from the white ones, for the use of the periwig-makers. Were he and I to count the grains in a bushel of wheat for a wager, he would certainly prove the winner.'

When one Collins, a sleep-compelling divine of Herefordshire, with the assistance of Counsellor Hardinge, published a heavy half-crown pamphlet against Mr. Steevens', Garrick asked the Doctor, what he thought of this attack on his coadjutor. 'I regard Collins's performance,' replied Johnson, 'as a great gun without powder or shot.' When the same Collins afterwards appeared as editor of Capel's *Posthumous Notes on Shakespeare*, with a preface of his own, containing the following words, 'A sudden and most severe stroke of affliction has left my mind too much distracted to be capable [at present] of engaging in such a task (that of a further attack on Mr. Steevens), though I am prompted to it by inclination as well as duty',—the Doctor asked to what misfortune the foregoing words referred. Being

dustry have never received from the public the recognition they deserved.' *Cambridge Shakespeare*, ed. 1891, i. Preface, pp. 37-8.

<sup>1</sup> John Collins was in charge of the parish of Ledbury in Herefordshire. In 1777, with the assistance of George Hardinge, he published an anonymous letter in refutation of Steevens's criticisms of Capell. Capell bequeathed to him a large sum of money. *Dict. Nat. Biog.* xi. 371; xxiv. 340.

Hardinge is aimed at in the following lines in *Don Juan* (Canto xiii. stanza 88):—

'There was the waggish Welsh  
Judge, Jefferies Hardsman,  
In his grave office so completely  
skill'd,  
That when a culprit came for  
condemnation,  
He had his judge's joke for con-  
solation.'

The title of the pamphlet is *A Letter to George Hardinge, Esq., on the subject of a Passage in Mr. Steevens' Preface to his Impressions of Shakespeare*. London, 1777. 4to, price three shillings. Lowndes's *Bibl. Man.* p. 2319.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, in his Dedication to Lord Dacre (not in his Preface), accuses Steevens of 'having dressed up his volumes [of Shakespeare] throughout by appropriating to himself, without reserve, whatever suited his purpose from the present Author's edition, with which he disclaims the slightest acquaintance. Without this detail the claim of the true owner to what has been obtruded upon the Public as the property of another is left at large undecided and unasserted.' He continues in the words quoted by Steevens, though after 'capable,' 'at present' has been omitted.

told

told that the critic had lost his wife, Johnson added, 'I believe that the loss of teeth may deprave the voice of a singer, and that lameness will impede the motions of a dancing master, but I have not yet been taught to regard the death of a wife as the grave of literary exertions. When my dear Mrs. Johnson expired I sought relief in my studies, and strove to lose the recollection of her in the toils of literature<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps, however, I wrong the feelings of this poor fellow. His wife might have held the pen in his name. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*<sup>2</sup>. Nay, I think I observe, throughout his two pieces, a woman's irritability, with a woman's impotence of revenge.' Yet such were Johnson's tender remembrances of his own wife, that after her death, though he had a whole house at command, he would study nowhere but in a garret. Being asked the reason why he chose a situation so incommodious, he answered, 'Because in that room only I never saw Mrs. Johnson<sup>3</sup>.'

'What think you, Dr. Johnson, of Mr. M——n's<sup>4</sup> conversation?' 'I think, Sir, it is a constant renovation of hope, and an unvaried succession of disappointment.'

'My dear Sir, don't disturb my feelings (said Garrick to Johnson one night behind the scenes); consider the exertions I have to go through.' 'As to your feelings, David,' replied Johnson, 'Punch has just as many; and as for your exertions, those of a man who cries turnips about the streets are greater<sup>5</sup>.'

'Were you ever, Sir, in company with Dr. Warburton?' 'I never saw him till one evening about a week ago, at the Bishop of St. ——'s<sup>6</sup>. At first he looked surlily at me; but

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, i. 12, for his prayer 'as preparatory to his return to life to-morrow.'

<sup>2</sup> Terence, *Andria*, i. 1. 99.

<sup>3</sup> It was in Gough Square that he was living at the time of her death. It was in an upper room, probably a garret, that his assistants in the Dictionary worked. *Life*, i. 188.

<sup>4</sup> Macklin. *Ante*, ii. 2 n., and *Life*, ii. 122.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 457; ii. 438.

<sup>6</sup> The Bishop of St. Asaph. Boswell, who had seen this account, writes:—'If I am rightly informed, after a careful enquiry, they [Johnson and Warburton] never met but once, which was at the house of after

after we had been jostled into conversation, he took me to a window, asked me some questions, and, before we parted, was so well pleased with me, that he patted me.' 'You always, Sir, preserved a respect for him?' 'Yes, and justly. When as yet I was in no favour with the world, he spake well of me, and I hope I never forgot the obligation.'

'Though you brought a Tragedy, Sir, to Drury-Lane<sup>2</sup>, and at one time were so intimate with Garrick, you never appeared to have much theatrical acquaintance.'—'Sir, while I had, in common with other dramatic authors, the liberty of the scenes, without considering my admission behind them as a favour, I was frequently at the theatre. At that period all the wenches knew me, and dropped me a curtsy as they passed on to the stage<sup>3</sup>. But since poor Goldsmith's last Comedy, I scarce recollect having seen the inside of a playhouse<sup>4</sup>. To speak the truth, there is small encouragement there for a man whose sight and hearing are become so imperfect as mine. I may add, that, Garrick and Henderson<sup>5</sup> excepted, I never met with

Mrs. French, in London, well known for her elegant assemblies, and bringing eminent characters together. The interview proved to be mutually agreeable.' *Life*, iv. 48.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Shakespeare* he praised Johnson's *Observations on Macbeth*. *Ib.* i. 176. For Johnson's criticism of him see *ante*, i. 381.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 386.

<sup>4</sup> See *Life*, i. 201 for the 'considerations of rigid virtue' which, if Garrick's story is to be trusted, kept him from going any longer behind the scenes.

<sup>5</sup> For *She Stoops to Conquer* see *ib.* iv. 325. Johnson went to Mrs. Abington's benefit two years later. *Ib.* ii. 324.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, speaking to Henderson 'of a certain dramatic writer, said, "I never did the man an injury; but he would persist in reading his tragedy to me."' *Life*, iv. 244, n. 2.

The man was Joseph Reed, the author of *Dido*. Nichols, *Lit. Anec.* ix. 116.

Henderson died less than a year after Johnson (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 923), and was buried in Westminster Abbey close to him. See the Plan in Stanley's *Westminster Abbey*, ed. 1868, p. 268.

'Cumberland said that the three finest pieces of acting which he had ever witnessed were Garrick's Lear, Henderson's Falstaff, and Cooke's Iago.' Rogers's *Table-Talk*, p. 136.

Macaulay, recording a voyage to Dublin, during which 'he went through *Paradise Lost* in his head,' says:—'In the dialogue at the end of the fourth book Satan and Gabriel became to me quite like two of Shakespeare's men. Old Sharp once told me that Henderson the actor used to say to him that there was no

a performer

a performer who had studied his art, or could give an intelligible reason for what he did <sup>1</sup>.

Though Dr. Johnson was no enemy to a proper and well-timed compliment, he would sometimes express his dislike of awkward and hyperbolic adulation. To a literary dame<sup>2</sup>, who had persecuted him throughout a whole afternoon with coarse and incessant flattery (after making several fruitless efforts to stop her career), he said, and loud enough for half the company present to hear—'My dear, before you are so lavish of your praise, you ought to consider whether it be worth having.'

'I am convinced (said he to a friend) I ought to be present at divine service more frequently than I am; but the provocations given by ignorant and affected preachers too often disturb the mental calm which otherwise would succeed to prayer<sup>3</sup>. I am apt to whisper to myself on such occasions—How can this illiterate fellow dream of fixing attention, after we have been listening to the sublimest truths, conveyed in the most chaste and exalted language, throughout a Liturgy which must be regarded as the genuine offspring of piety impregnated by wisdom? Take notice, however—though I make this confession respecting myself, I do not mean to recommend the fastidiousness that led me to exchange congregational for solitary worship.'—Dr. Johnson, notwithstanding, was at Streatham church when the unfortunate Dodd's first application to him was made. The Doctor went out of his pew immediately, wrote a suitable reply to the letter he had

better acting scene in the English drama than this. I now felt the truth of the criticism.' Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ed. 1877, ii. 265.

<sup>1</sup> 'I should like (wrote Sir Walter Scott), if it were possible, to anatomize Mrs. Siddons' intellect, that we might discover in what her unrivalled art consisted; she has not much sense, and still less sound taste, no reading but in her profession, and with a view to the

boards, and on the whole has always seemed to me a vain, foolish woman spoiled (and no wonder) by unbounded adulation to a degree that deserved praise tasted faint on her palate.' *Familiar Letters*, Boston, 1894, ii. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Hannah More. *Ante*, i. 273; ii. 179 n.

<sup>3</sup> For his 'great reluctance to go to Church,' see *Life*, i. 67, and for his irregular attendance, *ante*, i. 81.

received

received, and afterwards, when he related this circumstance, added,—‘I hope I shall be pardoned, if for once I deserted the service of God for that of man’.<sup>1</sup>

On the night before the publication of the first edition of his Shakespeare<sup>2</sup>, he supped with some friends in the Temple, who kept him up, ‘nothing loth<sup>3</sup>,’ till past five the next morning. Much pleasantry was passing on the subject of commentatorship; when, all on a sudden, the Doctor, looking at his watch, cried out—‘This is sport to you, gentlemen; but you do not consider there are at most only four hours between me and criticism.’

Previous to this convivial meeting, Mr. Tonson<sup>4</sup> had desired a gentleman to ask our Author if he could ascertain the number of his subscribers? ‘No,’ replied the Doctor; ‘two material reasons forbid even a guess of mine on the subject—I have lost all the names, and spent all the money. It came in small portions, and departed in the same manner<sup>5</sup>.’—There were afterwards receipts for near a thousand copies carried in to Tonson<sup>6</sup>.

‘I have seldom met with a man whose colloquial ability exceeded that of Mallet<sup>7</sup>. I was but once in Sterne’s company, and then his only attempt at merriment consisted in his display of a drawing too indecently gross to have delighted even in a brothel<sup>8</sup>. Colman never produced a luckier thing than his first Ode in ridicule of Gray. A considerable part of it may be numbered among those felicities which no man has twice

<sup>1</sup> He was in church, Boswell says, when a later letter of Dodd’s reached him. ‘He stooped down and read it, and wrote when he went home the following letter for Dr. Dodd to the King.’ *Life*, iii. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 496.

<sup>3</sup> *Paradise Lost*, ix. 1039.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 227, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* iv. 111.

<sup>6</sup> For each copy Johnson, I believe, received a guinea. *Letters*, i. 68, 124, n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> ‘His conversation was elegant and easy. The rest of his character may, without injury to his memory, sink into silence.’ *Works*, viii. 468; *Life*, i. 268, n. 1.

<sup>8</sup> In Murray’s *Johnsoniana*, ed. 1836, p. 133. *Sterne* is changed into *Hume*. ‘JOHNSON. “The man *Sterne*, I have been told, has had engagements for three months.” GOLDSMITH. “And a very dull fellow.” JOHNSON. “Why no, Sir.”’ *Life*, ii. 222.

attained

attained<sup>1</sup>. Gray was the very Torré<sup>2</sup> of poetry. He played his coruscations so speciously, that his steel-dust is mistaken by many for a shower of gold.'

At one period of the Doctor's life, he was reconciled to the bottle<sup>3</sup>. Sweet wines, however, were his chief favourites. When none of these were before him, he would sometimes drink Port, with a lump of sugar in every glass<sup>4</sup>. The strongest liquors, and in very large quantities, produced no other effect on him than moderate exhilaration. Once, and but once, he is known to have had his dose<sup>5</sup>; a circumstance which he himself discovered, on finding one of his sesquipedalian words hang fire. He then started up, and gravely observed—'I think it time we should go to bed<sup>6</sup>.' After a ten years' forbearance

<sup>1</sup> 'The *Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion*, in ridicule of "cool Mason and warm Gray," being mentioned, Johnson said, "They are Colman's best things." *Life*, ii. 334.

Gray wrote of them in July, 1760:—'I believe his Odes sell no more than mine did, for I saw a heap of them lie in a bookseller's window, who recommended them to me as a very pretty thing.' Gray's *Works*, ed. 1858, iii. 250.

'Gray (to whom nothing is wanting to render him, perhaps, the first poet in the English language but to have written a little more) is said to have been so much hurt by a foolish and impertinent parody of two of his finest odes, that he never afterwards attempted any considerable work.' Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. 1801, i. 255.

<sup>2</sup> See *Life*, iv. 324, for Johnson's going to see 'the celebrated Torré's fireworks at Marybone Gardens.'

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* i. 103, n. 3; *ante*, i. 217.

<sup>4</sup> It is not to be supposed that when 'University College witnessed him drink three bottles of port without being the worse for it' (*ib.* iii.

245), he put a lump of sugar into every one of his thirty-six glasses. No Oxford common-room would have stood it. Boswell, who drank port with him till either the wine made his head ache, or the sense his friend put into it (*ib.* iii. 381), makes no mention of this sugar.

<sup>5</sup> 'Dose is often used of the utmost quantity of strong liquor that a man can swallow. He has his *dose*, that is, he can carry off no more.' Johnson's *Dictionary*.

<sup>6</sup> 'Sir Joshua informed a friend that he had never seen Dr. Johnson intoxicated by hard drinking but once, and that happened at the time that they were together in Devonshire, when one night after supper Johnson drank three bottles of wine, which affected his speech so much that he was unable to articulate a hard word, which occurred in the course of his conversation. He attempted it three times but failed; yet at last accomplished it, and then said, "Well, Sir Joshua, I think it is now time to go to bed." Northcote's *Life of Reynolds*, ii. 161.

Johnson did not say 'Sir Joshua,'

of every fluid, except tea and sherbet, 'I drank,' said he, 'one glass of wine to the health of Sir Joshua Reynolds, on the evening of the day on which he was knighted. I never swallowed another drop till old Madeira was prescribed to me as a cordial during my present indisposition<sup>1</sup>, but this liquor did not relish as formerly, and I therefore discontinued it.'

Every change, however, in his habits, had invariable reference to that insanity which, from his two-and-twentieth year, he had taught himself to apprehend<sup>2</sup>. Whether he had once suffered from a temporary alienation of mind, or expected it only in consequence of some obscure warning he supposed himself to have received, will always remain a secret. To dispel the gloom that so constantly oppressed him, he had originally recourse to wine. Afterwards, he suspected danger from it<sup>3</sup>: 'For (said he) what ferments the spirits may also derange the intellects, and the means employed to counteract dejection may hasten the approach of madness. Even fixed, substantial melancholy is preferable to a state in which we can neither amend the future, nor solicit mercy for the past.' Impressed as he was with such ideas, each precaution he could adopt appeared hazardous in its turn. Even his favourite tea had been gradually drunk by him in reduced quantities, and at last was totally laid aside. Milk<sup>4</sup> became its substitute; and he looked forward to the spring, when he expected his new beverage would prove yet more salutary. 'Perhaps (says he) I shall conclude with what I ought to have begun. Milk was designed for our nutriment; tea and similar potations are all adscititious.'

as it was in 1762 that they visited Devonshire; Reynolds was knighted on April 21, 1769. Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 321.

<sup>1</sup> 'I used to slink home (Johnson said) when I had drunk too much.' *Life*, iii. 389. See also *ib.* i. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iv. 72.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* i. 63; iii. 175; *ante*, i. 472.

<sup>4</sup> 'Melancholy, indeed (said John-

son) should be diverted by every means but drinking.' *Life*, iii. 5. See also *ib.* i. 277, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> On Nov. 14, 1781, he wrote:— 'Here is Doctor Taylor, by a resolute adherence to bread and milk, with a better appearance of health than he has had for a long time past.' *Letters*, ii. 236.

At last, perhaps, his death was accelerated by his own imprudence. If 'a little learning is a dangerous thing' on any speculative subject, it is eminently more so in the practical science of physic. Johnson was too frequently his own patient<sup>2</sup>. In October, [1784,] just before he came to London, he had taken an unusual dose of squills, but without effect<sup>3</sup>. He swallowed the same quantity on his arrival here, and it produced a most violent operation. He did not, as he afterwards confessed, reflect on the difference between the perished and inefficacious vegetable he found in the country, and the fresh and potent one of the same kind he was sure to meet with in town. 'You find me at present,' says he, 'suffering from a prescription of my own. When I am recovered from its consequences, and not till then, I shall know the true state of my natural malady.' From this period, he took no medicine without the approbation of Heberden. What follows is known by all, and by all lamented—ere now, perhaps—even by the prebends of Westminster<sup>4</sup>.

Dr. Johnson confessed himself to have been sometimes in the power of bailiffs. Richardson, the author of *Clarissa*, was his constant friend on such occasions<sup>5</sup>. 'I remember writing to him,' said Johnson, 'from a sponging house; and was so sure of my deliverance through his kindness and liberality, that, before his reply was brought, I knew I could afford to joke with the rascal who had me in custody, and did so, over a pint of adulterated wine, for which, at that instant, I had no money to pay<sup>6</sup>.'

<sup>2</sup> POPE, *Essay on Criticism*, l. 215.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iii. 152; *Letters*, ii. 165 n.

<sup>4</sup> On August 16 he had written to Dr. Brocklesby:—'The squills I have not neglected; for I have taken more than 100 drops a day, and one day took 250.' On the 19th he wrote:—'The squills have every suffrage, and in the squills we will rest for the present.' *Life*, iv. 355.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 449 n.; ii. 137 n.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, i. 303; *Letters*, i. 61.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, i. 304 n.

Johnson defines a *sponging-house* as 'a house to which debtors are taken before commitment to prison, where the bailiffs sponge upon them, or riot at their cost.' Why in all likelihood Johnson ordered the wine is explained in the following passage in Fielding's *Amelia*, Bk. viii. ch. 10:—"What say you (said the bailiff to Booth) to a glass of white wine, or a tiff of punch, by way of



It has been already observed, that Johnson had lost the sight of one of his eyes<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Ellis<sup>2</sup>, an ancient gentleman now

whet?" "I have told you, Sir, I never drink in the morning," cries Booth a little peevishly. "No offence, I hope, Sir," said the bailiff; "I hope I have not treated you with any incivility. I don't ask any gentleman to call for liquor in my house, if he doth not choose it; nor I don't desire anybody to stay here longer than they have a mind to.—Newgate, to be sure, is the place for all debtors that can't find bail. . . . I'd have you consider that the twenty-four hours appointed by Act of Parliament are almost out; and so it is time to think of removing." . . . "I did not think (said Booth) to have offended you so much by refusing to drink in a morning."

In *Joseph Andrews*, Bk. iii. ch. 3, the prison is described to which the debtor was transferred; where 'he was crowded in with a great number of miserable wretches, in common with whom he was destitute of every convenience of life, even that which all the brutes enjoy, wholesome air.' See also *Jonathan Wild*, Bk. i. ch. 4.

John Howard describes how 'all sorts of prisoners are confined together; debtors and felons.' 'One cause (he adds) why the rooms in some prisons are so close is perhaps the window-tax, which the gaolers have to pay; this tempts them to stop the windows, and stifle their prisoners. In many Gaols, and in most Bridewells, there is no allowance of straw for prisoners to sleep on. The frequent effect of confinement in prison seems generally understood, and shews how full of emphatical meaning is the curse of a severe creditor, who pronounces his debtor's doom to ROT IN GAOL.'

*State of the Prisons*, ed. 1777, pp. 15-17.

In the *Annual Register*, 1769, i. 114, is the account of a discharge of a debtor after twenty-seven years' imprisonment, under an Act for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors. He had not been guilty of 'fraudulent intention,' neither had he been 'a debtor to the Crown,' otherwise he would not have had the benefit of the Act. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1769, p. 266.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 41.

<sup>2</sup> 'It is wonderful, Sir (said Johnson), what is to be found in London. The most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed was at the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener, behind the Royal Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine generally once a week.' *Ib.* iii. 21.

Jeremy Bentham said, 'I supped at the Mitre Tavern once, when they exhibited a complete service of plate. We came to hear Johnson's good things. There was Bickerstaff,—there was Ellis, the last scrivener of the City of London, who died at the age of ninety-four, a pleasant old fellow,—there was Hoole, and there was Goldsmith. But I was angry with Goldsmith for writing the *Deserted Village*. I liked nothing gloomy; besides it was not true, for there were no such villages.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 124. Bentham's father had been Clerk to the Scriveners' Company. *Ib.* p. 279.

Milton's father and Gray's father were scriveners. Johnson's *Works*, vii. 66; viii. 476.

Johnson defines *money scrivener* as 'one who raises money for others,' and quotes a passage from Arbuthnot, where it is said:—'Such fellows are living

living (author of a very happy burlesque translation of the thirteenth book, added to the *Æneid* by Maffei Vegio<sup>1</sup>), was in the same condition; but, some years after, while he was at Margate, the sight of his eye unexpectedly returned, and that of its fellow became as suddenly extinguished. Concerning the particulars of this singular but authenticated event, Dr. Johnson was studiously inquisitive, and not without reference to his own case. Though he never made use of glasses to assist his sight, he said he could recollect no production of art to which man has superior obligations<sup>2</sup>. He mentioned the name of the original inventor<sup>3</sup> of spectacles with reverence, and expressed his wonder that not an individual, out of the multitudes who had profited by them, had, through gratitude, written the life of so great a benefactor to society.

His knowledge in manufactures was extensive, and his comprehension relative to mechanical contrivances was still more extraordinary<sup>4</sup>. The well known Mr. Arkwright pronounced him to be the only person who, on a first view, understood both the principle and powers of his most complicated piece of machinery<sup>5</sup>.

like your wire-drawing mills, if they get hold of a man's finger they will pull in his whole body at last.' *Scrivener* he defines as:—'1. One who draws contracts. 2. One whose business is to place money at interest.'

'The Company of Scriveners, being reduced to low circumstances, thought proper to sell their Hall in Noble Street to the Coachmakers' Company.' Dodsley's *London*, 1761, v. 323.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 21, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Swift refused to use them. *Post*, p. 343 n.

<sup>3</sup> 'Some writers attribute the invention to Alexander Spina, a monk of Pisa, who died about 1299 or 1300; but the invention of magnifying-glasses by Roger Bacon, who died some years before that time, justifies the supposition that some-

thing like what are now called spectacles were in use at least several years earlier.' *Penny Cyclopaedia*, xxii. 328. See also *ib.* iii. 244.

<sup>4</sup> 'Dr. Johnson this morning explained to us all the operation of coining, and, at night, all the operation of brewing, so very clearly, that Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Queen said, when he heard the first, he thought he had been bred in the Mint; when he heard the second, that he had been bred a brewer.' *Life*, v. 215. 'Last night he gave us an account of the whole process of tanning—and of the nature of milk, and the various operations upon it, as making whey, &c.' *ib.* v. 246. See also *ib.* v. 124 for his talk about the manufacture of gunpowder, p. 263 for his talk about threshing and thatching, and *ante*, ii. 118.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson was well acquainted with Dr.

Dr. Johnson delighted in the company of women. 'There are few things,' he would say, 'that we so unwillingly give up, even in an advanced age, as the supposition that we have still the power of ingratiating ourselves with the Fair Sex.' Among his singularities, his love of conversing with the prostitutes whom he met with in the streets was not the least. He has been known to carry some of these unfortunate creatures into a tavern, for the sake of striving to awaken in them a proper sense of their condition. His younger friends now and then affected to tax him with less chastised intentions. But he would answer—'No Sir; we never proceeded to the *Opus Magnum*. On the contrary, I have rather been disconcerted and shocked by the replies of these giddy wenches, than flattered or diverted by their tricks. I remember asking one of them for what purpose she supposed her Maker had bestowed on her so much beauty? Her answer was—"To please the gentlemen, to be sure; for what other use could it be given me?"'

The Doctor is known to have been, like Savage, a very late visitor<sup>2</sup>; yet at whatever hour he returned, he never went to bed without a previous call on Mrs. Williams, the blind lady who for so many years had found protection under his roof<sup>3</sup>. Coming home one morning between four and five, he said to her, 'Take notice, Madam, that for once I am here before others are asleep. As I returned into the court, I ran against a knot of bricklayers.' 'You forget, my dear Sir,' replied she, 'that these people have all been a-bed, and are now preparing for their day's work.' 'Is it so, then, Madam? I confess that circumstance had escaped me<sup>3</sup>.'

'Garrick, I hear, complains that I am the only popular author

the spinning-machine invented by Lewis Paul, which was in many respects imitated by Arkwright in his machine. *Letters*, i. 6, n. 3.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 223 n.; iv. 321, 396; *ante*, ii. 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 421.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Duke of Devonshire [the husband of the beautiful Duchess whom Reynolds painted] when walk-

ing home from Brookes's about day-break used frequently to pass the stall of a cobbler who had already commenced his work. As they were the only persons stirring in that quarter, they always saluted each other. "Good *night*, friend," said the Duke. "Good *morning*, Sir," said the cobbler.' Rogers's *Table-Talk*, p. 191.

of

of his time, who has exhibited no praise of him in print<sup>1</sup>; but he is mistaken; Akenside has forbore to mention him<sup>2</sup>. Some, indeed, are lavish in their applause of all who come within the compass of their recollection. Yet he who praises everybody praises nobody. When both scales are equally loaded, neither can preponderate<sup>3</sup>.

Perhaps, said a gentleman, a *Congé d'Elire* has not the force of a positive command, but implies only a strong recommendation.—'Yes (replied Johnson, who overheard him), just such a recommendation as if I should throw you out of a three pair of stairs window, and recommend you to fall to the ground<sup>4</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> 'I complained that he had not mentioned Garrick in his Preface to Shakspeare; and asked him if he did not admire him. JOHNSON. "Yes, as 'a poor player, who frets and struts his hour upon the stage;'—as a shadow." BOSWELL. "But has he not brought Shakspeare into notice?" JOHNSON. "Sir, to allow that, would be to lampoon the age." *Life*, ii. 92.

He did worse than not mention him in the Preface; he reflected upon him, though not by name, as 'a not very communicative collector' of rare copies of Shakspeare. *Ib.* ii. 192. However he cited him in his Dictionary. *Ib.* iv. 4. In the Preface he says:—'My purpose was to admit no testimony of living authors, that I might not be misled by partiality, and that none of my contemporaries might have reason to complain; nor have I departed from this resolution, but when some performance of uncommon excellence excited my veneration, when my memory supplied me from late books with an example that was wanting, or when my heart, in the tenderness of friendship, solicited admission for a favourite name.' *Works*, v. 39.

For his mention of Garrick in the

*Lives of the Poets*, see *Life*, i. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson must have got the knowledge of this fact second-hand, for he could not read Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination* through. *Ib.* ii. 164.

<sup>3</sup> 'Sur quelque préférence une estime se fonde,

Et c'est n'estimer rien qu' estimer tout le monde.'

Molière, *Le Misanthrope*, i. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'A gentleman having said that a *congé d'elire* has not, perhaps, the force of a command, but may be considered only as a strong recommendation; "Sir, (replied Johnson, who overheard him,) it is such a recommendation, as if I should throw you out of a two-pair of stairs window, and recommend to you to fall soft." *Life*, iv. 323.

Boswell says in a note:—'This has been printed in other publications, "fall to the ground." But Johnson himself gave me the true expression which he had used as above; meaning that the recommendation left as little choice in the one case as the other.'

Johnson, in his *Dictionary*, says that:—'Congé d'Elire signifies, in common law, the King's permission royal to a dean and chapter, in time of vacation, to choose a bishop.'

The

[The following anecdote included by Croker in Steevens's Collection is not given in the *European Magazine* for January, 1785].

'Night,' Mr. Tyers has told us, 'was Johnson's time for composition'. But this assertion, if meant for a general one, can be refuted by living evidence. Almost the whole Preface to *Shakespeare*, and no inconsiderable part of the *Lives of the Poets*, were composed by daylight, and in a room where a friend<sup>2</sup> was employed by him in other investigations. His studies were only continued through the night when the day had been preoccupied,

Blackstone, after citing the statute 25 Hen. VIII. c. 20, continues:—'If such dean and chapter do not elect in the manner by this act appointed . . . they shall incur all the penalties of a *praemunire*.' *Commentaries*, ed. 1775, i. 379.

When, in 1847, the Dean of Hereford, holding the opinion of 'the gentleman' of the anecdote, informed the Prime-minister, Lord John Russell, that he would not comply with the *congé d'élire* by electing Dr. Hampden, Lord John replied:—'Sir, I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 22nd inst., in which you intimate to me your intention of violating the law. I have, &c.,

J. RUSSELL.'

Walpole's *Life of Lord J. Russell*, i. 480.

At the confirmation of Hampden's election in Bow Church, 'after the judge had told the opposers that he could not hear them, the citation for opposers to come forward was repeated, at which the people present laughed out, as at a play.' H. C. Robinson's *Diary*, 1869, iii. 311.

'The truth of it is, a woman seldom asks advice before she has bought her wedding-clothes. When she has made her own choice, for

form's sake she sends a *congé d'élire* to her friends.' Addison, *The Spectator*, No. 475.

<sup>2</sup> *Post*, p. 346.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Croker is probably right in saying that this friend was Steevens himself. Nevertheless there is nothing to show what those investigations were in which he was engaged while Johnson was writing the Preface to *Shakespeare*. In 1766, the year after it was published, Steevens brought out twenty plays of *Shakespeare* in four volumes. 'A coalition having been effected between him and Johnson, another edition made its appearance in 1773.' Nichols, *Lit. Hist.* v. 428. A second of these joint editions was published in 1778, and a third in 1785. Lowndes, *Bibl. Man.* p. 2270. That in preparing his notes for all three editions he often worked in Johnson's room is very likely. He lived at the top of Hampstead Heath, in a house still standing. 'He was always an early riser, and rarely failed walking to London and back.' His custom was to call at Isaac Reed's in Staple Inn by 7 o'clock in the morning, where he found a room ready. Later on in the day 'he generally passed some time with Dr. Johnson.' When carrying his last edition through the

or

or proved too short for his undertakings. Respecting the fertility of his genius, the resources of his learning, and the accuracy of his judgment, the darkness and the light were both alike<sup>1</sup>.

press, during eighteen months he left his house at one in the night with the Hampstead patrol. Nichols, *Lit. Hist.* v. 427.

Miss Hawkins (*Memoirs*, i. 153) says that Johnson's man-servant,

Frank, 'took bribes for denying his master to others, when Mr. Steevens wanted his assistance in his *Shakespeare*.'

<sup>1</sup> 'The darkness and light to thee are both alike.' *Psalms*, cxxxix. 11.

*ANECDOTES*  
*BY THE REV. PERCIVAL STOCKDALE*

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[FROM *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Percival Stockdale*. 2 vols. 8vo, 1809, (vol. ii. pp. 44, 59, 64, 185, 189). For a brief account of Stockdale see *Life*, ii. 113.]

In 1776 Garrick wrote to Lord Sandwich, the first Lord of the Admiralty, to ask for leave of absence for Stockdale, who was a sea-chaplain. Sandwich replied:—‘I fear the attending in London upon a literary business and the duty of a sea-chaplain are incompatible. . . . If a fortnight’s leave of absence would enable him to finish his pamphlet, I could strain a point to make it easy to him.’ Garrick thanked him for having ‘bestowed a great favour upon a man of letters and talents when he most wanted it.’ *Garrick Corres.* ii. 173.]

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ABOUT the year 1770, I was invited by the lively and hospitable Tom Davies to dine with him, to meet some interesting characters. Dr. Johnson was of the party, and this was my first introduction to him: there were others, with whom every intelligent mind would have wished to converse,—Dr. Goldsmith and Mr. Meyer, the elegant miniature painter<sup>1</sup>. Swift was one of our convivial subjects; of whom it was Dr. Johnson’s invariable

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah Meyer. It was at the election of his successor as a Royal Academician that the dispute arose which led to Reynolds’s resignation

of his presidency and his seat as an Academician. Leslie and Taylor’s *Reynolds*, ii. 570.

custom

custom to speak in a disparaging and most unworthy manner<sup>1</sup>. We gave our sentiments, and undoubtedly of high panegyric, on the *Tale of a Tub*; of which Dr. Johnson insisted, in his usual positive manner, that it was impossible that Swift should have been the author, it was so eminently superior to all his other works<sup>2</sup>. I expressed my own conviction, that it was written by Swift, and that, in many of his productions, he showed a genius not unequal to the composition of the *Tale of a Tub*. The Doctor desired me to name one. I replied, that I thought *Gulliver's Travels*<sup>3</sup> not unworthy of the performance he so exclusively admired. He would not admit the instance; but said, that 'if Swift was really the author of the *Tale of a Tub*, as the best of his other performances were of a very inferior merit, he should have hanged himself after he had written it.'

Johnson said on the same day, 'Swift corresponded minutely with Stella and Mrs. Dingley<sup>4</sup>, on his importance with the ministry, from excessive vanity—that the women might exclaim, "What a great man Dr. Swift is!"'

Among other topics, Warburton claimed our attention. Goldsmith took a part against Warburton whom Johnson strenuously defended, and, indeed, with many strong arguments, and with bright sallies of eloquence<sup>5</sup>. Goldsmith ridiculously asserted, that Warburton was a weak writer. This misapplied characteristic Dr. Johnson refuted. I shall never forget one of the happy metaphors with which he strengthened and illustrated his refutation. 'Warburton,' said he, 'may be absurd, but he will never be weak: he *flounders* well.'

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 373, 479; ii. 211.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* i. 452; ii. 318; v. 44; *Works*, viii. 197.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 319. In his *Life of Gay* Johnson says of that writer's 'little poems':—'Those that please least are the pieces to which Gulliver gave occasion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?' *Works*, viii. 71.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iv. 177.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson said:—'I treated Warburton with great respect both in my Preface and in my Notes' to Shakespeare. *Ib.* iv. 288. The notes are often contemptuous and sarcastic: 'I am well informed (writes Boswell) that Warburton said of Johnson, "I admire him, but cannot bear his style;" and that Johnson being told of this said, "That is exactly my case as to him."' *Ib.* iv. 48.

Lord



Lord Lyttelton told me, that on a visit to Mr. Pope, while he was translating the *Iliad*, he took the liberty to express to that great poet his surprise, that he had not determined to translate Homer's poem into blank verse; as it was an epic poem, and as he had before him the illustrious example of Milton, in the *Paradise Lost*. Mr. Pope's answer to Lord Lyttelton was, that 'he could translate it more easily into rhyme.' I communicated this anecdote to Dr. Johnson; his remark on it to me was, very erroneous in criticism,—'Sir, when Pope said that, he knew that he lied'.

When Dr. Johnson and I were talking of Garrick, I observed that he was a very moderate, fair, and pleasing companion; when we considered what a constant influx had flowed upon him, both of fortune and fame, to throw him off of his bias of moral and social self-government. 'Sir,' replied Johnson, in his usual emphatical and glowing manner, 'you are very right in your remark; Garrick has undoubtedly the merit of a temperate and unassuming behaviour in society; for more pains have been taken to spoil that fellow, than if he had been heir apparent to the empire of India'!

When Garrick was one day mentioning to me Dr. Johnson's illiberal treatment of him, on different occasions; 'I question,' said he, 'whether, in his calmest and most dispassionate moments, he would allow me the high theatrical merit which the public have been so generous as to attribute to me.' I told him, that I would take an early opportunity to make the trial, and that I would not fail to inform him of the result of my experiment. As I had rather an active curiosity to put Johnson's disinterested generosity fairly to the test, on this apposite subject, I took an early opportunity of waiting on him, to hear his verdict on Garrick's pretensions to his great and universal fame. I found him in very good and social humour; and I began a conversation which naturally led to the mention of Garrick. I said something particular on his excellence as an actor; and I added,

' For Johnson's expression 'he lies and he knows he lies,' see *Life*, iv. 49, and for his opinion of blank verse see *ib.* iv. 42.  
 ' *Ib.* iii. 263; *ante*, ii. 244.

' But

'But pray, Dr. Johnson, do you really think that he deserves that illustrious theatrical character, and that prodigious fame, which he has acquired?' 'Oh, Sir,' said he, 'he deserves every thing that he has acquired, for having seized the very soul of Shakspeare; for having embodied it in himself; and for having expanded its glory over the world'.<sup>1</sup> I was not slow in communicating to Garrick the answer of the Delphic oracle. The tear started in his eye—'Oh! Stockdale,' said he, 'such a praise from such a man!—*this* atones for all that has passed.'

I called on Dr. Johnson one morning, when Mrs. Williams, the blind lady, was conversing with him. She was telling him where she had dined the day before. 'There were several gentlemen there,' said she, 'and when some of them came to the tea-table, I found that there had been a good deal of hard drinking.' She closed this observation with a common and trite moral reflection; which, indeed, is very ill-founded, and does great injustice to animals—'I wonder what pleasure men can take in making beasts of themselves!' 'I wonder, Madam,' replied the Doctor, 'that you have not penetration enough to see the strong inducement to this excess; for he who makes a *beast* of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man'.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Bruce, an old Scotch lady, the widow of Captain Bruce, who had been for many years an officer in the Russian service, drank tea with me one afternoon at my lodgings in Bolt Court, when Johnson was one of the company. She spoke very broad Scotch; and this alarmed me for her present social situation. As we were conversing on a subject in which we were interested, she interrupted us by saying that we should give Dr. Johnson an opportunity of favouring the company with *his* sentiments. By this absurd interruption the Doctor was naturally far less communicative. That undaunted dame was, however, determined to

<sup>1</sup> 'BOSWELL. "But has not Garrick brought Shakespeare into notice?" JOHNSON. "Sir, to allow that would be to lampoon the age."' *Life*, ii. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, in his *Life of Somers-*

*vile*, quotes the following passage from one of Shenstone's letters:—'For a man of high spirits . . . to be forced to drink himself into pains of the body in order to get rid of the pains of the mind is a misery.'

make

make him speak if it was possible. 'Dr. Johnson,' said she, 'you tell us, in your Dictionary, that in England oats are given to horses; but that in Scotland they support the people'. Now, Sir, I can assure you, that in Scotland we give oats to our horses, as well as you do to yours in England.' I almost trembled for the widow of the Russian hero; I never saw a more contemptuous leer than that which Johnson threw at Mrs. Bruce: however, he deigned her an answer,—'I am very glad, Madam, to find that you treat your horses as well as you treat yourselves.' I was delivered from my panic, and I wondered that she was so gently set down.

Soon after I had entered on my charge as domestic tutor to my Lord Craven's son I called on Dr. Johnson. 'Well (said he) how do you like your place?' On my hesitating to answer, or on my answer which expressed not much love of my situation, he added the following words of consolation: 'You must expect insolence.'

\* 'Oats. A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.'

'The sarcastic Jew in Richard of Devizes' *History of Richard I* says Oxford barely keeps its *clerks* from starving, Exeter gives the same grain

to men and horses.' C. W. Boase's *Oxford*, p. 65.

Hector told Boswell that Johnson, in his boyhood, 'used to have oatmeal porridge for breakfast.' *Morrison Autographs*, 2nd series, i. 368.

*A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF  
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON*

*BY THOMAS TYERS<sup>1</sup>*

---

WHEN Charles the Second was informed of the death of Cowley, he pronounced, 'that he had not left a better man behind him in England'.<sup>2</sup> It may be affirmed with truth, that this was the case when Dr. Johnson breathed his last. Those who observed his declining state of health during the last winter, and heard his complaints, of painful days and sleepless nights, for which he took large quantities of opium<sup>3</sup>, had no reason to expect that he could survive another season of frost and snow.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Gentleman's Magazine*, December, 1784. 'The gentleman whom he thus familiarly mentioned [as Tom Tyers] was Mr. Thomas Tyers, son of Mr. Jonathan Tyers, the founder of that excellent place of publick amusement, Vauxhall Gardens. Mr. Thomas Tyers was bred to the law; but having a handsome fortune, vivacity of temper, and eccentricity of mind, he could not confine himself to the regularity of practice. He therefore ran about the world with a pleasant carelessness, amusing everybody by his desultory conversation. He abounded in anecdote, but was not sufficiently attentive to

accuracy. I therefore cannot venture to avail myself much of a biographical sketch of Johnson which he published, being one among the various persons ambitious of appending their names to that of my illustrious friend. That sketch is, however, an entertaining little collection of fragments.' *Life*, iii. 308.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, vii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> 'I have such horror of opiates,' he wrote, 'that I do not think of them but *in extremis*.' *Letters*, ii. 367. See also *ib.* pp. 376, 383. Dr. Brocklesby noticed that 'opiate was never destructive of his readiness in conversation.' *Ib.* ii. 437.

His

His constitution was totally broken, and no art of the physician or surgeon could protract his existence beyond the 13th of December. When he was opened, one of his kidneys was found decayed. He never complained of disorder in that region; and probably it was not the immediate cause of his dissolution. It might be thought that so strong and muscular a body might have lasted many years longer. For Johnson drank nothing but water, and lemonade (by way of indulgence), for many years, almost uninterruptedly, without the taste of any fermented liquor: and he was often abstinent from animal food<sup>1</sup>, and kept down feverish symptoms by dietetic management. Of Addison and Pope he used to observe, perhaps to remind himself, that they ate and drank too much, and thus shortened their days<sup>2</sup>. It was thought by many, who dined at the same table, that he had too great an appetite<sup>3</sup>. This might now and then be the case, but not till he had subdued his enemy by famine. But his bulk seemed to require now and then to be repaired by kitchen physic. To great old age not one in a thousand arrives. How few were the years of Johnson in comparison of those of Jenkins and Parr<sup>4</sup>! But perhaps Johnson had more of life, by his intenseness of living. Most people die of disease. He was all his life preparing himself for death: but particularly in the last stage of his asthma and dropsy. 'Take care of your soul—don't live such a life as I have done—don't let your business or dissipation make you neglect your sabbath'—were now his constant inculcations<sup>5</sup>. Private and publick prayer, when his visitors were his audience, were his constant exercises. He cannot be said to have been weary of the weight of existence, for he

<sup>1</sup> On July 10, 1780, he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'Last week I saw flesh but twice, and I think fish once, the rest was pease.' *Letters*, ii. 184. See *ib.* ii. 143.

<sup>2</sup> 'From the coffee-house Addison went again to a tavern, where he often sat late, and drank too much wine.' *Works*, vii. 449. 'The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. . . .

The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver saucepan, it which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.' *Ib.* viii. 310.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 330.

<sup>4</sup> It was confidently asserted that Henry Jenkins was born in 1501 and died in 1670 and that Thomas Parr was born in 1483 and died in 1635.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iv. 410, 413-14, 416; *ante*, ii. 157.

declared

declared, that to prolong it only for one year, but not for the comfortless sensations he had lately felt, he would suffer the amputation of a limb<sup>1</sup>. He was willing to endure positive pain for possible pleasure. But he had no expectation that nature could last much longer. And therefore, for his last week, he undoubtedly abandoned every hope of his recovery or duration, and committed his soul to God. Whether he felt the instant stroke of death, and met the king of terrors face to face, cannot be known: for 'death and the sun cannot be looked upon,' says Rochefoucault<sup>2</sup>. But the writer of this has reason to imagine that when he thought he had made his peace with his Maker, he had nothing to fear<sup>3</sup>. He has talked of submitting to a violent death, in a good cause, without apprehensions. On one of the last visits from his surgeon, who on performing the puncture on his legs, had assured him that he was better, he declared, 'he felt himself not so, and that he did not desire to be treated like a woman or a child, for that he had made up his mind<sup>4</sup>.' He had travelled through the vale of this world for more than seventy-five years. It probably was a wilderness to him for more than half his time. But he was in the possession of rest and comfort and plenty, for the last twenty years<sup>5</sup>. Yet the blessings of fortune and reputation could not compensate to him the want of health, which pursued him through his pilgrimage on earth. *Post equitem sedet atra cura.*

'For when we mount the flying steed,  
Sits gloomy Care behind<sup>6</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 409; *ante*, ii. 132.

<sup>2</sup> 'Le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder fixement.' *Maximes*, xxvi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 203.

<sup>4</sup> 'I deny (said Johnson) the lawfulness of telling a lie to a sick man for fear of alarming him. You have no business with consequences; you are to tell the truth. Besides, you are not sure what effect your telling him that he is in danger may have. It may bring his distemper to a crisis, and that may cure him. Of all lying, I have the greatest abhor-

rence of this, because I believe it has been frequently practised on myself.' *Life*, iv. 306.

<sup>5</sup> It was in 1762 that his pension was given him, and in 1765 that his friendship with the Thrales began. His 'rest and comfort' were greatly marred by Mr. Thrale's death in 1781, and by the estrangement from Mrs. Thrale which soon followed. His feeling of solitude was increased by the death of Levett in 1782, and of Miss Williams in 1783.

<sup>6</sup> 'And when he mounts,' &c.

FRANCIS. HORACE, *Odes*, iii. 1, 36.

Of the hundred sublunary things bestowed on mortals, health is ninety-nine. He was born with a scrophulous habit, for which he was touched, as he acknowledged, by good Queen Anne, whose piece of gold he carefully preserved<sup>1</sup>. But even a Stuart could not expel that enemy to his frame, by a touch. For it would have been even beyond the stroking power of Greatrix in all his glory, to charm it away<sup>2</sup>. Though he seemed to be athletic as Milo himself, and in his younger days performed several feats of activity, he was to the last a *convulsionary*<sup>3</sup>. He has often stepped aside, to let nature do what she would with him. His gestures, which were a degree of St. Vitus's dance, in the street, attracted the notice of many: the stare of the vulgar, but the compassion of the better sort. This writer has often looked another way, as the companions of Peter the Great were used to do, while he was under the short paroxysm<sup>4</sup>. He was perpetually taking opening medicines<sup>5</sup>. He could only keep his ailments from gaining ground. He thought he was worse for the agitation of active exercise<sup>6</sup>. He was afraid of his disorders seizing his head,

<sup>1</sup> 'She hung about his neck the usual amulet of an angel of gold, with the impress of St. Michael the archangel on one side and a ship under full sail on the other.' Hawkins, p. 4; *ante*. i. 133.

<sup>2</sup> 'Mr. Gretrakes is said to have cured pains and diseases only by touching; and the excellent Dr. H. More, who gives a particular account of him, attributes his great success to a certain sanative virtue in his hand; and supposes it might be conferred upon him as a distinguishing grace on account of the regenerate and confirmed state of piety which he seemed to be in.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1748, p. 449.

See *Dict. Nat. Biog.* under GREAT-RAKES, VALENTINE.

<sup>3</sup> *Convulsionary* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*. The only instance Dr. Murray gives of its use is as a translation of *convulsionnaire*—'one of a number of fanatics in France in

the eighteenth century, who fell into convulsions and extravagances, supposed to be accompanied by miraculous cures,' &c. All that Tyers meant was that Johnson was subject to those 'motions or tricks' which Reynolds said were in his case 'improperly called convulsions.' *Ante*, ii. 222, 273.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Czar while young, and even until his death, was subject to frequent fits of a violent spasm of the brain. It was a kind of convulsion which threw him sometimes for whole hours into so dreadful a situation that he could not bear the presence of any person, not even of his best friends.' *Original Anecdotes of Peter the Great*, London, 1788, p. 109.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, ii. 101.

<sup>6</sup> Probably this was only towards the close of his life when he was distressed with asthma. For his recommendation of exercise see *Life*, i. 446; iv. 150, n. 2; *Letters*, ii. 99.

and

and took all possible care that his understanding should not be deranged<sup>1</sup>. *Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano*<sup>2</sup>. When his knowledge from books, and he knew all that books could tell him<sup>3</sup>, is considered; when his compositions in verse and prose are enumerated to the reader (and a complete list of them wherever dispersed is desirable<sup>4</sup>) it must appear extraordinary he could abstract himself so much from his feelings, and that he could pursue with ardour the plan he laid down of establishing a great reputation. Accumulating learning (and the example of Barretier, whose life he wrote<sup>5</sup>) shewed him how to arrive at all science. His imagination often appeared to be too mighty for the control of his reason. In the preface to his Dictionary, he says, that his work was composed 'amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.' 'I never read this preface,' says Mr. Horne<sup>6</sup>, 'but it makes me shed tears.'

If this memoir-writer possessed the pen of a Plutarch, and the subject is worthy of that great biographer, he would begin his account from his youth, and continue it to the last period of his life, in the due order of an historian. What he knows and can recollect, he will perform. His father (called 'gentleman'<sup>7</sup> in the parish register) he says himself, and it is also within memory, was an old bookseller at Lichfield, and a whig in principle<sup>8</sup>. The father of Socrates was not of higher extraction, nor of a more honourable profession. Our author was born in that city; and the house of his birth was a few months ago visited by a learned

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 64; v. 215; *ante*, i. 199, 472; ii. 322.

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, *Satires*, x. 356; *Life*, iv. 401.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 214 n.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 304 n.; *Life*, i. 16, 112.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, i. 148; *Works*, vi. 376.

<sup>6</sup> Better known as Horne Tooke. *Life*, i. 297, n. 2; *ante*, i. 405 n.

<sup>7</sup> 'His father is there stiled *Gentleman*, a circumstance of which an ignorant panegyrist has praised him for not being proud; when the truth is, that the appellation of Gentleman,

though now lost in the indiscriminate assumption of *Esquire*, was commonly taken by those who could not boast of gentility.' *Life*, i. 34.

<sup>8</sup> 'He was a zealous high-church man and royalist, and retained his attachment to the unfortunate house of Stuart, though he reconciled himself by casuistical arguments of expediency and necessity to take the oaths imposed by the prevailing power.' *Ib.* i. 36. For Johnson's defence of a Jacobite's taking the oaths see *ib.* ii. 322.



acquaintance, the information of which was grateful to the Doctor. It may probably be engraved for some monthly repository<sup>1</sup>. The print and the original dwelling may become as eminent as the mansion of Shakspeare at Stratford, or of Erasmus at Rotterdam. He certainly must have had a good school education. He was entered of Pembroke College, Oxford, Oct. 31, 1728, and continued there for several terms. By whose bounty he was supported, may be known to enquiry<sup>2</sup>. While he was there, he was negligent of the College rules and hours, and absented himself from some of the lectures, for which when he was reprimanded and interrogated, he replied with great rudeness and contempt of the lecturer<sup>3</sup>. Indeed he displayed an overbearing disposition that would not brook control, and shewed that, like Cæsar, he was fitter to command than to obey. This dictatorial spirit was the leading feature in his deportment to his contemporaries. His college themes and declamations are still remembered; and his elegant translation of Pope's *Messiah* into Latin verse found its way into a volume of poems published by one Husbands<sup>4</sup>. In 1735, after having been some time an usher to Anthony Blackwall<sup>5</sup>, his friends assisted him to set up an academy near Lichfield<sup>6</sup>. Here he formed an acquaintance with the late Bishop Green, then an usher at Lichfield<sup>7</sup>, and

<sup>1</sup> In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February, 1785, a view was given of Johnson's birthplace.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 58; *ante*, i. 362.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 164.

<sup>4</sup> Fellow of Pembroke College. *Life*, i. 61, n. 3. See *ante*, i. 459.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell denies the truth of this statement, on the ground that 'Blackwall died on April 8, 1730, more than a year before Johnson left the University.' As Johnson left it in December, 1729, the proof is valueless. *Life*, i. 78, n. 2, 84. Dr. Westby-Gibson, in his article on Blackwall in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, argues in favour of the statement, and says, 'We may conclude Johnson taught in the school for two years

and a half.' That he left it a few days before July 27, 1732, we know from a letter Malone had seen. *Life*, i. 85, n. 1. Hawkins (p. 20) says that it was in March, 1732, that he went to the school. The entry in his Diary 'Julii 16 [1732] *Bosvortiam pedes petii*' probably, as Dr. Westby-Gibson says, refers to his return after the summer vacation. That he was not there on Oct. 30, 1731, is shown by a letter written from Lichfield on that day, in which he says, 'I am yet unemployed.' *Letters*, i. 1.

<sup>6</sup> It was most likely with his wife's money that he set up his academy. *Ante*, i. 367; *Life*, i. 95, n. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, i. 45.

with

with Mr. Hawkins Browne<sup>1</sup>. As the school probably did not answer his expectation (for who does not grow tired of teaching others, especially if he wants to teach himself?), he resolved to come up to London, where everything is to be had for wit and for money (*Romæ omnia venalia*), and to seek his fortune. He was accompanied by his pupil Mr. Garrick: and travelled on horseback to the metropolis in March, 1737<sup>2</sup>.

The time and business of this journey are before the public in some letters from Mr. Walmsley, who recommends Johnson as a writer of tragedy; as a translator from the French language; and as a good scholar<sup>3</sup>. He brought with him his tragedy of *Irene*, which afterwards took its chance on Drury-Lane theatre<sup>4</sup>. Luckily he did not throw it into the fire, by design or otherwise, as Parson Adams did his *Æschylus* by mistake<sup>5</sup>. He offered himself for the service of the booksellers; 'for he was born for nothing but to write'<sup>6</sup>—

'And from the jest obscene reclaim our youth,  
And set our passions on the side of truth'<sup>7</sup>.

The hurry of this pen prevents the recollection of his first performances. But he used to call Dodsley his *patron*<sup>8</sup>, because he made him, if not first, yet best known by printing and publishing, upon his own judgment, his Satire, called *London*<sup>9</sup>, which was an imitation of one of Juvenal, whose gravity and severity of expression he possessed. He there and then discovered how able he was 'to catch the manners living as they rise'<sup>10</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 266; *Life*, ii. 339.

<sup>2</sup> 'Both of them used to talk pleasantly of this their first journey to London. Garrick, evidently meaning to embellish a little, said one day in my hearing, "we rode and tied."' *Life*, i. 101, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 368; *Life*, i. 102.

<sup>4</sup> He had written only three acts of *Irene* on his first coming to London; he continued it at Greenwich and finished it at Lichfield. *Life*, i. 106-7.

<sup>5</sup> *Joseph Andrews*, Bk. ii. ch. 12.

<sup>6</sup> 'Heav'ns! was I born for nothing but to write?'

Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, l. 272.

<sup>7</sup> 'He from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,  
And sets the passions on the side of truth.'

Pope, *Imitations of Horace, Epis.* 2. l. 217.

<sup>8</sup> Writing about the representation of Dodsley's *Cleone* Johnson says:—  
'I went the first night, and supported it as well I might; for Diddy, you know, is my patron, and I would not desert him.' *Life*, i. 326.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.* i. 124.

<sup>10</sup> Pope, *Essay on Man*, i. 14.

poem had a great sale, was applauded by the public, and praised by Mr. Pope, who, not being able to discover the author, said 'he will soon be *déterré*'.<sup>1</sup> In 1738 he luckily fell into the hands of his other early patron, Cave. His speeches for the Senate of Lilliput were begun in 1740, and continued for several sessions. They passed for original with many till very lately. But Johnson, who detested all injurious imposition, took a great deal of pains to acknowledge the innocent deception. He gave Smollett notice of their unoriginality, while he was going over his historical ground, and to be upon his guard in quoting from the Lilliput Debates<sup>2</sup>. It is within recollection, that an animated speech he put into the mouth of Pitt, in answer to the Parliamentary veteran, Horace Walpole<sup>3</sup>, was much talked of, and considered as genuine<sup>4</sup>. Members of parliament acknowledge, that they reckon themselves much obliged for the printed accounts of debates of both Houses, because they are made to speak better than they do in the Senate. Within these few years, a gentleman in a high employment under government was at breakfast in Gray's-Inn, where Johnson was present, and was commending the excellent preservation of the speeches of both houses, in the Lilliput Debates<sup>5</sup>. He declared, he knew how to appropriate every speech without a signature; for that every person spoke in character, and was as certainly and as easily known as a speaker in Homer or in Shakspeare. 'Very likely, Sir,' said

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 373.

<sup>2</sup> Smollett quoted them as if they were genuine. *History of England*, iii. 73. See *Life*, i. 505.

<sup>3</sup> Horace Walpole, first Baron Walpole, brother of Sir Robert.

<sup>4</sup> It is the speech which begins:— 'Sir, the atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honourable gentleman has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are

ignorant in spite of experience.' *Works*, x. 355.

Horace Walpole, Sir Robert Walpole's son, complained that the published report of his own first speech 'did not contain one sentence of the true one.' Walpole's *Letters*, i. 147. Forty-nine years later he wrote:—'I never knew Johnson wrote the speeches in the *Gentleman's Magazine* till he died.' *Ib.* ix. 319.

<sup>5</sup> Wedderburne, I think, is meant. He was one of the party—a dinner party given by Foote. *Life*, i. 504; *ante*, i. 378.

Johnson

Johnson, ashamed of having deceived him, 'but I wrote them in the garret where I then lived.' His predecessor in this oratorical fabrication was Guthrie<sup>1</sup>; his successor in the Magazine was Hawkesworth<sup>2</sup>. It is said, that to prove himself equal to this employment (but there is not leisure for the adjustment of chronology) in the judgment of Cave, he undertook the *Life of Savage*<sup>3</sup>, which he asserted (not incredible of him), and valued himself upon it, that he wrote in six and thirty hours<sup>4</sup>. In one night he also composed, after finishing an evening in Holborn, his *Hermit of Teneriff*<sup>5</sup>. He sat up a whole night to compose the preface to the *Preceptor*<sup>6</sup>.

His eye-sight was not good; but he never wore spectacles, not on account of such a ridiculous vow as Swift made not to use them<sup>7</sup>, but because he was assured they would be of no service to him. He once declared, that he 'never saw the human face divine'<sup>8</sup>. He saw better with one eye than the other, which, however, was not like that of Camoens, the Portuguese poet, as expressed on his medal<sup>9</sup>. Latterly perhaps he meant to save his eyes, and did not read so much as he otherwise would. He preferred conversation to books; but when driven to the refuge of reading by being left alone, he then attached himself to that

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 378; ii. 92; *Life*, i. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 512.

<sup>3</sup> The publication of the last of Johnson's *Debates* was in March, 1744; the *Life of Savage* had appeared in the previous February. *Ib.* i. 165, 511.

<sup>4</sup> 'I wrote forty-eight of the printed octavo pages of the *Life of Savage* at a sitting; but then I sat up all night.' *Ib.* v. 67. There were 180 pages in all.

<sup>5</sup> *The Vision of Theodore the Hermit of Teneriffe found in his Cell.* *Works*, ix. 162. 'The Bishop of Dromore heard Dr. Johnson say that he thought this was the best thing he ever wrote.' *Life*, i. 192.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* i. 192.

<sup>7</sup> 'Having thus excluded conversation and desisted from study Swift

had neither business nor amusement; for having by some ridiculous resolution, or mad vow, determined never to wear spectacles he could make little use of books in his later years.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 218. Perhaps Stella used to urge him to wear them, for in his verses to her he says:—

'Nor think on our approaching  
ills,

And talk of spectacles and pills.'

Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xi. 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Paradise Lost*, iii. 44. For Johnson's eyesight see *ante*, i. 337.

<sup>9</sup> In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April, 1784 (p. 257), is given an engraving of this medal, which shows Camoens' disfigurement by the loss of an eye. See also *ib.* p. 415.

amusement

amusement<sup>1</sup>. 'Till this year,' said he to an intimate, 'I have done tolerably well without sleep, for I have been able to read like Hercules<sup>2</sup>.' But he picked and culled his companions for his midnight hours; 'and chose his author as he chose his friend<sup>3</sup>.' The mind is as fastidious about its intellectual meal as the appetite is as to its culinary one; and it is observable, that the dish or the book that palls at one time is a banquet at another<sup>4</sup>. By his innumerable quotations you would suppose, with a great personage<sup>5</sup>, that he must have read more books than any man in England, and have been a mere book-worm: but he acknowledged that supposition was a mistake in his favour. He owned he had hardly ever read a book through<sup>6</sup>. The posthumous volumes of Mr. Harris of Salisbury (which treated of subjects that were congenial with his own professional studies) had attractions that engaged him to the end<sup>7</sup>. Churchill used to say, having heard perhaps of his confession, as a boast, that 'if Johnson had only read a few books, he could not be the author of his own works.' His opinion, however, was, that he who reads most, has the chance of knowing most; but he declared, that the perpetual task of reading was as bad as the slavery in the mine, or the labour

<sup>1</sup> On April 19, 1783, he wrote:—  
'I can apply better to books than I could in some more vigorous parts of my life, at least than I *did*; and I have one more reason for reading; that time has, by taking away my companions, left me less opportunity of conversation.' *Letters*, ii. 289. See also *Life*, iv. 218, n. 1, where he said to Malone:—'I have been confined this week past; and here you find me roasting apples and reading the *History of Birmingham*.'

<sup>2</sup> 'He lamented much his inability to read during his hours of restlessness. "I used formerly (he added) when sleepless in bed to read like a Turk."' *Life*, iv. 409.

<sup>3</sup> 'Then seek a *Poet* who your Way does bend  
And chuse an *Author* as you  
chuse a *Friend*.'

Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse*, l. 95.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iii. 193.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell describes George III as 'A GREAT PERSONAGE.' *Ib.* i. 219. Tyers exaggerates what the king said. *Ib.* ii. 36.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* i. 71; ii. 226; *ante*, i. 332, 363.

<sup>7</sup> Harris's last work, his *Philological Inquiries*, was published in 1781, the year after his death.

JOHNSON. "Harris is a sound sullen scholar; he does not like interlopers. Harris, however, is a prig, and a bad prig. I looked into his book [*Hermes*] and thought he did not understand his own system." *Life*, iii. 245. See *ib.* v. 377, where 'he thought Harris "a coxcomb." This he said of him not as a man but as an author.' See also *ante*, i. 187; ii. 70.

at the oar. He did not always give his opinion unconditionally of the pieces he had even perused, and was competent to decide upon<sup>1</sup>. He did not choose to have his sentiments generally known; for there was a great eagerness, especially in those who had not the pole-star of judgment to direct them, to be taught what to think or say on literary performances. 'What does Johnson say of such a book?' was the question of every day. Besides, he did not want to increase the number of his enemies, which his decisions and criticisms had created him; for he was generally willing to retain his friends, to whom, and their works, he bestowed sometimes too much praise, and recommended beyond their worth, or perhaps his own esteem. But affection knows no bounds. Shall this pen find a place in the present page to mention, that a shameless Aristophanes had an intention of taking him off upon the stage, as the *Rehearsal* does the great Dryden<sup>2</sup>? When it came to the notice of our exasperated man of learning, he conveyed such threats of vengeance and personal punishment to the mimic, that he was glad to proceed no farther<sup>3</sup>. The reverence of the public for his character afterwards, which was increasing every year, would not have suffered him to be the object of theatrical ridicule. Like Fame in Virgil, *vires acquirit eundo*<sup>4</sup>. In the year 1738 he wrote the *Life of Father Paul*, and published proposals for a translation of his *History of the Council of Trent*, by subscription: but it did not go on<sup>5</sup>. Mr. Urban even yet hopes to recover some sheets of this translation, that were in a box under St. John's Gate; more certainly once

<sup>1</sup> 'JOHNSON. "My judgment I have found is no certain rule as to the sale of a book." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, have you been much plagued with authors sending you their works to revise?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; I have been thought a sour, surly fellow."' *Life*, iv. 121. See *ante*, i. 332.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, ii. 168; *Works*, vii. 272.

<sup>3</sup> The mimic was Foote. *Ante*, i. 424.

<sup>4</sup> *Aeneid*, iv. 175.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, i. 107, 135, 139.

Macaulay, after saying that he 'admires no historians much except Herodotus, Thucydides and Tacitus,' continues;—'Perhaps, in his way, a very peculiar way, I might add Fra Paolo. . . . He is my favourite modern historian. His subject did not admit of vivid painting; but, what he did, he did better than anybody.' Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ed. 1877, ii. 270, 285. 'That incomparable historian,' Gibbon called him. *Misc. Works*, iv. 551.

placed there, than Rowley's Poems were in the chest in a tower of the church of Bristol<sup>1</sup>.

Night was his time for composition. Indeed he literally turned night into day, *noctes vigilabat ad ipsum mane*; but not like Tigellius in Horace<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps he never was a good sleeper, and (while all the rest of the world was in bed) he chose his lamp, in the words of Milton,

‘In midnight hour,  
Were seen in some high lonely tower’<sup>3</sup>.

He wrote and lived perhaps at one time only from day to day, and (according to vulgar expression) from sheet to sheet. Dr. Cheyne<sup>4</sup> reprobates the practice of turning night into day, as pernicious to mind and body. Jortin has something to say on the vigils of a learned man, in his *Life of Erasmus*. ‘As he would not sleep when he could, nothing but opium could procure him repose.’ There is cause to believe, he would not have written unless under the pressure of necessity. *Magister artis ingenique largitor venter*, says Persius<sup>5</sup>. He wrote to live, and luckily for mankind lived a great many years to write. All his pieces are promised for a new edition of his works under the inspection of Sir John Hawkins, one of his executors, who has undertaken to be his biographer. Johnson's high tory principles in church and state were well known. But neither his *Prophecy of the Hanover Horse*, lately maliciously reprinted<sup>6</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Satires*, i. 3. 17. Steevens denies that ‘night was Johnson's time for composition.’ *Ante*, ii. 328.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Or let my lamp at midnight hour

Be seen in some high lonely tower.’

*Il Penseroso*, l. 85.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 65. Fielding writes his name *Cheney*, which shows how it was pronounced. ‘The learned Dr. Cheney used to call drinking punch pouring liquid fire down your throat.’ *Tom Jones*, Bk. xi. ch. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Prologus*, l. 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Marmor Norfolciense* (*Life*, i.

141) ‘resolves itself into an invective against a standing army, a ridicule of the balance of power, complaints of the inactivity of the British lion, and that the Hanover horse was suffered to suck his blood.’ Hawkins, p. 72. It was reprinted in 1775. About a year later Boswell mentioned the republication to Johnson. ‘To my surprise, he had not yet heard of it. He requested me to go directly and get it for him, which I did. He looked at it and laughed, and seemed to be much diverted with the feeble efforts of his unknown adversary, who, I hope, is alive to read this account. “Now (said he) here is

nor his political principles or conversations, got him into any personal difficulties, nor prevented the offer of a pension, nor his acceptance. *Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire quæ velis, et, quæ sentias dicere licet*<sup>1</sup>. The present royal family are winning the hearts of all the friends of the house of Stuart<sup>2</sup>. There is here neither room nor leisure to ascertain the progress of his publications, though, in the idea of Shenstone, it would exhibit the history of his mind and thoughts.

He was employed by Osborne to make a catalogue of the Harleian Library. Perhaps, like those who stay too long on an errand, he did not make the expedition his employer expected, from whom he might deserve a gentle reprimand. The fact was, when he opened a book he liked, he could not restrain from reading it. The bookseller upbraided him in a gross manner, and, as tradition goes, gave him the lie direct, though our catalogue-maker offered at an excuse. Johnson turned the volume into a weapon, and knocked him down, and told him, 'not to be in a hurry to rise, for when he did, he proposed kicking him down stairs'<sup>3</sup>. Perhaps the lie direct may be punished *ad modum recipientis*, as the law gives no satisfaction. His account of the collection, and the tracts that are printed in quarto volumes<sup>4</sup>, were well received by the public. Of his folio labours in his English Dictionary<sup>5</sup> a word must be said; but there is not room for much. The delineation of his plan, which was esteemed a beautiful composition, was inscribed to Lord Chesterfield, no doubt with permission, whilst he was secretary of state<sup>6</sup>. It was at this time, he said, he aimed at elegance of writing, and

somebody who thinks he has vexed me sadly: yet, if it had not been for you, you rogue, I should probably never have seen it.'" *Life*, i. 142.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Historiae*, i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dr. Johnson grew so outrageous as to say [in 1777] that if England were fairly polled the present King would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow.' *Life*, iii. 155. 'Sir (said he [1783] in a low voice, having

come nearer to me, while his old prejudices seemed to be fermenting in his mind), this Hanoverian family is isolée here. They have no friends.' *Ib.* iv. 165.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 304; *Life*, i. 154.

<sup>4</sup> The *Harleian Miscellany* was printed in eight quarto volumes. Johnson wrote the preface. *Life*, i. 175.

<sup>5</sup> His *Dictionary* was published in two folio volumes.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* i. 183.



set for his emulation the Preface of Chambers to his *Cyclopaedia*<sup>1</sup>. Johnson undoubtedly expected beneficial patronage. It should seem that he was in the acquaintance of his Lordship, and that he had dined at his table, by an allusion to him in a letter to his son, printed by Mrs. Stanhope, and which he himself would have been afraid to publish. While he was ineffectually hallooing the Graces in the ear of his son, he set before him the slovenly behaviour of our author at his table, whom he acknowledges as a great genius, but points him out as a rock to avoid, and considers him only as 'a respectable Hottentot'.<sup>2</sup> When the book came out, Johnson took his revenge, by saying of it, 'that the instructions to his son inculcated the manners of a dancing master, and the morals of a prostitute'.<sup>3</sup> Within this year or two he observed (for anger is a short-lived passion), that, bating some improprieties, it contained good directions, and was not a bad system of education<sup>4</sup>. But Johnson probably did not think so highly of his own appearance as of his morals. For, on being asked if Mr. Spence had not paid him a visit<sup>5</sup>? 'Yes,' says he, 'and he probably may think he visited a bear.' 'Johnson,' says the author of the *Life of Socrates*, 'is a literary savage.' 'Very likely,' replied Johnson; 'and Cooper (who was as thick as long) is a literary Punchinello'.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'He once told me that he had formed his style upon that of Sir William Temple, and upon Chambers's Proposal for his *Dictionary*.' *Life*, i. 218.

<sup>2</sup> I had proved, I thought, beyond a doubt that it was not Johnson, but the first Lord Lyttelton, who was Chesterfield's Hottentot. *Life*, i. 267, n. 2; *Lord Chesterfield's Worldly Wisdom*, p. 134. I was disappointed to find that the Professor of English Literature in Glasgow, the late Mr. John Nichol, held to the old opinion in his *Thomas Carlyle* (English Men of Letters Series), p. 44. See *ante*, i. 384.

<sup>3</sup> 'They teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master.' *Life*, i. 266.

<sup>4</sup> 'Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*, I think, might be made a very pretty book. Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman.' *Ib.* iii. 53.

<sup>5</sup> 'I mentioned Pope's friend, Spence. JOHNSON. "He was a weak conceited man." BOSWELL. "A good scholar, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, no, Sir." BOSWELL. "He was a pretty scholar." JOHNSON. "You have about reached him." *Ib.* v. 317.

<sup>6</sup> Cooper wrote the *Life of Socrates*. 'Being told that Gilbert Cowper [*sic*] called him the Caliban of Literature; "Well (said he,) I must dub him the Punchinello."' *Life*, ii. 129.

It does not appear that Lord Chesterfield showed any substantial proofs of approbation to our Philologer, for that was the professional title he chose<sup>1</sup>. A small present he would have disdained<sup>2</sup>. Johnson was not of a temper to put up with the affront of disappointment. He revenged himself in a letter to his Lordship, written with great acrimony, and renouncing all acceptance of favour<sup>3</sup>. It was handed about, and probably will be published, for *litera scripta manet*. He used to say, 'he was mistaken in his choice of a patron, for he had simply been endeavouring to gild a rotten post<sup>4</sup>.'

Lord Chesterfield indeed commends and recommends Mr. Johnson's Dictionary in two or three numbers of the *World*. Not words alone pleased him. 'When I had undergone,' says the compiler, 'a long and fatiguing voyage, and was just getting into port, this Lord sent out a small cock-boat to pilot me in<sup>5</sup>.' The agreement for this great work was for fifteen hundred pounds. This was a large bookseller's venture at that time: and it is in many shares<sup>6</sup>. Robertson, Gibbon, and a few more, have raised the price of manuscript copies. In the course of fifteen years, two and twenty thousand pounds have been paid to four authors<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Philology and biography were his favourite pursuits.' *Life*, iv. 34. 'The faults of the book [the *Dictionary*] resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist.' Macaulay's *Misc. Writings*, ed. 1871, p. 382. Perhaps he was not worse than some of the most learned of his contemporaries. Philology, as a science, did not yet exist. Johnson defines it as 'criticism; grammatical learning.'

<sup>2</sup> He had received ten pounds. *Life*, i. 261.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* i. 261.

<sup>4</sup> According to Rebecca Warner (*Original Letters*, p. 204), Johnson telling Joseph Fowke about his refusal to dedicate his *Dictionary* to Chesterfield, said:—'Sir, I found I must have gilded a rotten post.'

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, i. 260; *ante*, i. 405.

<sup>6</sup> Boswell mentions seven partners in the *Dictionary*. *Life*, i. 183. In the title-page of the first edition an eighth, L. Hawes, is mentioned.

<sup>7</sup> In 1773 Hawkesworth was paid £6,000 for *Cook's Voyages*. *Ib.* ii. 247, n. 5. In 1768 Robertson was paid £3,400 for the first edition of his *Charles V.* For the second edition he was to receive £400. *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. 15. Hume, for the first two volumes of his *History of England* (the Stuart period), received, it seems, £1,940. At this rate he would have received nearly £8,000 for the whole work. 'The copy-money given me by the booksellers,' he wrote, 'much exceeded anything formerly known in England.' *Ib.* pp. 15, 33. How much Gibbon was paid is not, I think, Johnson's

Johnson's world of words demands frequent editions. His titles of Doctor of Laws from Dublin and from Oxford<sup>1</sup> (both of which came to him unasked and unknown, and only not unmerited); his pension from the King, which is to be considered as a reward for his pioneering services in the English language, and by no means as a bribe<sup>2</sup>; gave him consequence, and made the Dictionary and its author more extensively known. It is a royal satisfaction to have made the life of a learned man more comfortable to him.

'These are imperial works, and worthy Kings.'

Lord Corke, who would have been kinder to him than Stanhope (if he could) as soon as it came out, presented the Dictionary to the Academy della Crusca at Florence in 1755<sup>4</sup>. Even for the abridgment in octavo<sup>5</sup>, which puts it into every body's hands, he was paid to his satisfaction, by the liberality of his booksellers. His reputation is as great for compiling, digesting, and ascertaining the English language, as if he had invented it. His Grammar in the beginning of the work was the best in our language, in the opinion of Goldsmith. During the printing of his Dictionary, the *Ramblers* came out periodically; for he could do more than one thing at a time. He declared that he wrote them by way of relief from his application to his Dictionary, and for the reward. He has told this writer, that he had no expectation they would have met with so much success, and been so much read and admired<sup>6</sup>. What was amusement to him, is instruction

known. Blair was paid for his *Sermons*, £1,100. *Life*, iii. 98. For his *Lectures on Rhetoric*, which came later, he, no doubt, received a far larger sum. His *Sermons* and Hume's *History* do not, however, fall within 'a course of fifteen years.' Boswell was, it seems, offered £1,000 for his *Life of Johnson*, but he resolved to keep the copyright. *Ante*, ii. 33, 37.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 488; ii. 331.

<sup>2</sup> 'He told Sir Joshua that Lord Bute said to him expressly, "It is not given you for anything you are to do, but for what you have done."

His Lordship, he said, behaved in the handsomest manner. He repeated the words twice, that he might be sure Johnson heard them.' *Ib.* i. 374.

<sup>3</sup> 'These are imperial arts and worthy thee.'

Dryden, quoted in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 298, 443. Stanhope was Lord Chesterfield.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* i. 305.

<sup>6</sup> 'So slowly did this excellent work, of which twelve editions have now issued from the press, gain upon to

to others. Goldsmith declared, that a system of morals might be drawn from these Essays: this idea is taken up and executed by a publication in an alphabetical series of moral maxims<sup>1</sup>.

The *Rambler* is a great task for one person to accomplish, single-handed. For he was assisted only in two Essays by Richardson, two by Mrs. Carter, and one by Miss Talbot<sup>2</sup>. His *Idlers* had more hands<sup>3</sup>. The *World*<sup>4</sup>, the *Connoisseur*<sup>5</sup>, (the *Gray's Inn Journal* an exception<sup>6</sup>), the *Mirror*<sup>7</sup>, the *Adventurer*<sup>8</sup>, the *Old Maid*<sup>9</sup>, all had helpmates. The toilet as well as the shelf and table have these volumes, lately republished with decorations. Shenstone, his fellow collegian, calls his style a learned one<sup>10</sup>. There is indeed too much Latin in his English. He seems to have caught the infectious language of Sir Thomas Brown, whose works he read, in order to write his life<sup>11</sup>. Though it cannot be said, as Campbell did of his own last work<sup>12</sup>,

the world at large, that even in the closing number the authour says, "I have never been much a favourite of the publick." *Life*, i. 208.

<sup>1</sup> In *The Beauties of the Rambler*. *Ib.* i. 214. In note 1 on this page I have confused this book with *The Beauties of Johnson*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* i. 203; *ante*, i. 465.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 330.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* i. 257, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* i. 420, n. 3.

<sup>6</sup> 'It was successfully carried on by Mr. Murphy alone, when a very young man.' *Ib.* i. 356; *ante*, i. 408.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, iv. 390.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* i. 252.

<sup>9</sup> By Frances Brooke, 1755-6.

<sup>10</sup> Shenstone matriculated on May 25, 1732, more than two years after Johnson left. *Dr. Johnson: His Friends and his Critics*, p. 345. Writing on Feb. 9, 1760, Shenstone says:—'I have lately been reading one or two volumes of *The Rambler*; who, excepting against some few hardnasses in his manner, and the

want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most nervous, most perspicuous, most concise, [and] most harmonious prose writers I know. A learned diction improves by time.' *Life*, ii. 452.

<sup>11</sup> 'Sir Thomas Brown, whose life Johnson wrote, was remarkably fond of Anglo-Latian diction; and to his example we are to ascribe Johnson's sometimes indulging himself in this kind of phraseology.' *Ib.* i. 221. See *ib.* i. 308 for an example of Johnson's *Brownism*. Nevertheless he condemned Brown's style as 'a tissue of many languages; a mixture of heterogeneous words brought together from distant regions,' &c. *Works*, vi. 500. Murphy traces Johnson's learned diction to his work on the *Dictionary*. *Ante*, i. 466.

<sup>12</sup> *A Political Survey of Great Britain*. 'Johnson said to me, that he believed Campbell's disappointment, on account of the bad success of that work, had killed him.' *Life*, ii. 447.

that

that there is not a hard word in it, yet he does not rattle through hard words and stalk through polysyllables, to use an expression of Addison<sup>1</sup>, as in his earlier productions. His style, as he says of Pope, became smoothed by the scythe, and levelled by the roller<sup>2</sup>. It pleased him to be told by Dr. Robertson, that he had read his Dictionary twice over. If he had some enemies beyond and even on this side of the Tweed, he had more friends<sup>3</sup>. Only he preferred England to Scotland. As it is cowardly to insult a dead lion, it is hoped, that as death extinguishes envy, it also does ill-will: 'for British vengeance wars not with the dead'<sup>4</sup>.

He gave himself very much to companionable friends for the last years of his life (for he was delivered from the daily labour of the pen, and he wanted relaxation), and they were eager for the advantage and reputation of his conversation<sup>5</sup>. Therefore he frequently left his own home (for his household gods were not numerous or splendid enough for the reception of his great acquaintance<sup>6</sup>), and visited them both in town and country. This was particularly the case with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale (*ex uno disce omnes*<sup>7</sup>), who were the most obliging and obliged of all within his intimacy, and to whom he was introduced by his friend Murphy<sup>8</sup>. He lived with them a great part of every year. He formed at Streatham a room for a library, and increased by his recommendation the number of books. Here he was to be found (himself a library) when a friend called upon him; and by him the friend was sure to be introduced to the dinner-table, which Mrs. Thrale knew how to spread with the utmost plenty and elegance<sup>9</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> 'Your high nonsense blusters and makes a noise; it stalks upon hard words and rattles through polysyllables.' *The Whig Examiner*, No. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 'Pope's page is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe and levelled by the roller.' *Works*, viii. 324.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 121, 306; *ante*, i. 429.

<sup>4</sup> 'From zeal or malice now no more we dread,

For English vengeance wars not with the dead.'

Johnson's *Prologue to A Word to the*

*Wise*. *Life*, iii. 114; *ante*, i. 181; ii. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, ii. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Boswell, who dined and slept at Johnson's house, 'found everything in excellent order.' *Life*, ii. 215, 375; iv. 92. Hawkins (*ante*, ii. 120) says that he 'sometimes gave not inelegant dinners.' See also *ante*, ii. 141.

<sup>7</sup> 'Crimine ab uno

Disce omnes.' *Aeneid*, ii. 65.

<sup>8</sup> *Ante*, i. 232.

<sup>9</sup> For her luxurious table see *Life*, iii. 423, *n.* 1; *Letters*, ii. 389, and *ante*, ii. 43.

and which was often adorned with such guests, that to dine there was, *epulis accumbere divum*<sup>1</sup>. Of Mrs. Thrale, if mentioned at all, less cannot be said, than that in one of the latest opinions of Johnson, 'if she was not the wisest woman in the world, she was undoubtedly one of the wittiest<sup>2</sup>.' She took or caused such care to be taken of him, during an illness of continuance, that Goldsmith told her, 'he owed his recovery to her attention<sup>3</sup>.' She taught him to lay up something of his income every year<sup>4</sup>. Besides a natural vivacity in conversation, she had reading enough, and the gods had made her poetical. *The Three Warnings*<sup>5</sup> (the subject she owned not to be original) are highly interesting and serious, and literally come home to every body's breast and bosom. The writer of this would not be sorry if this mention could follow the lady to Venice<sup>6</sup>. At Streatham, where our Philologer was also guide, philosopher, and friend<sup>7</sup>, he passed much time. His inclinations here were consulted, and his will was a law. With this family he made excursions into Wales<sup>8</sup> and to Brighthelmstone. Change of air and of place were grateful to him, for he loved vicissitude. But he could not long endure the illiteracy and rusticity of the country<sup>9</sup>, for woods and groves, and hill and dale, were not his scenes :

<sup>1</sup> *Aeneid*, i. 79.

<sup>2</sup> "I wonder," said Mrs. Thrale, "you bear with my nonsense." "No, Madam, you never talk nonsense; you have as much sense and more wit than any woman I know." Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 87. See also *Letters*, ii. 153.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 234.

<sup>4</sup> If this is a fact,—which I greatly doubt,—he repaid her lesson by urging economy on her and her husband. *Letters*, i. 198-9. See *Life*, v. 442, where he recorded in his *Diary*:—"Mrs. Thrale lost her purse. She expressed so much uneasiness, that I concluded the sum to be very great; but when I heard of only seven guineas, I was glad to find that she had so much sensibility of money."

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* ii. 26. Hayward's *Piozzi*, ed. 1861, ii. 165.

According to Lysons 'the first hint of this poem was given to her by Johnson; she brought it to him very incorrect; and he not only revised it throughout, but supplied several new lines.' She denied that it was suggested by Johnson, but apparently admitted the rest of the statement. Prior's *Malone*, p. 413.

<sup>6</sup> After her second marriage, in July, 1784, she had gone to Italy. *Letters*, ii. 407, n. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Pope, *Essay on Man*, iv. 390. Applied also by Boswell to Johnson in connexion with Mrs. Thrale. *Life*, iii. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* v. 427. He also accompanied them to France. *Ib.* ii. 384. Brighton he frequently visited with them.

<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless he paid long visits

‘Tower’d cities please us then,  
And the busy hum of men’.

But the greatest honour of his life was from a visit that he received from a Great Personage in the Library of the Queen’s palace—only it was not from a King of his own making<sup>2</sup>. Johnson on his return repeated the conversation, which was much to the honour of the great person, and was as well supported as Lewis the XIVth could have continued with Voltaire. He said, he only wanted to be more known, to be more loved<sup>3</sup>. They parted, much pleased with each other. If it is not an impertinent stroke of this pen, it were to be wished that one more person had conveyed an enquiry about him during his last illness. ‘Every body has left their names, or wanted to know how I do,’ says he, ‘but’——<sup>4</sup>. In his younger days he had a great many enemies, of whom he was not afraid.

‘Ask you what provocation I have had?  
The strong antipathy of good to bad’.

Churchill, the puissant satirist, challenged Johnson to combat: Satire the weapon<sup>6</sup>. Johnson never took up the gauntlet or replied, for he thought it unbecoming him to defend himself against an author who might be resolved to have the last word<sup>7</sup>. He was content to let his enemies feed upon him as long as they could. This writer has heard Churchill declare, that ‘he thought the poems of *London*, and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, full of admirable verses, and that all his compositions were diamonds of the first water.’ But he wanted a subject for his pen and for raillery, and so introduced Pomposo into his descriptions. ‘For, with other wise folks, he sat up with the ghost’<sup>8</sup>. Our author,

to the country—one of ‘near six months’ in 1767. *Life*, iii. 450–3.

<sup>2</sup> *L’Allegro*, l. 117.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 33. Tyers apparently alludes to Johnson’s liking for the House of Stuart.

<sup>4</sup> For Johnson’s praise of the King as ‘the finest gentleman he had ever seen’ see *ib.* ii. 40.

<sup>5</sup> I suppose the King is meant.

<sup>6</sup> Pope, *Epilogue to the Satires*, ii. 197.

<sup>6</sup> For Churchill’s attack on Johnson see his *Works*, ed. 1766, i. 216, 261; ii. 36, and *Life*, i. 319, 406, 419; iii. 1, *n.* 2. Dr. Warton wrote in 1797:—‘We all remember when Churchill was more in vogue than Gray.’ Warton’s *Pope’s Works*, i. Introduction, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> For Johnson’s silence on attack see *Life*, i. 314; *ante*, i. 270, 407.

<sup>8</sup> ‘The gentlemen eminent for their rank and character,’ among them who

who had too implicit a confidence in human testimony, followed the newspaper invitation to Cock-lane, in order to detect the imposter, or, if it proved a being of an higher order, and appeared in a questionable shape<sup>1</sup>, to talk with it. Posterity must be permitted to smile at the credulity of that period<sup>2</sup>. Johnson had otherwise a vulnerable side; for he was one of the few Nonjurors that were left<sup>3</sup>, and it was supposed he would never bow the knee to the Baal of Whiggism. This reign, which disdained proscription, began with granting pensions (without requiring their pens) to learned men<sup>4</sup>.

Johnson was unconditionally offered one; but such a turn was given to it by the last mentioned satirical poet, that it might have made him angry or odious, or both. Says Churchill, amongst other passages very entertaining to a neutral reader,

‘He damns the pension that he takes,  
And loves the Stuart he forsakes<sup>5</sup>.’

Johnson and Douglas, ‘the great detector of impostures,’ who one night investigated the story of the Cock Lane Ghost, ‘sat rather more than an hour’ in the chamber where the spirit was said to be heard. *Life*, i. 407, n. 3.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Thou com’st in such a questionable shape.’ *Hamlet*, Act i. sc. 4. l. 43. Johnson, in a note on this passage, says:—‘Hamlet, amazed at an apparition which, though in all ages credited, has in all ages been considered as the most wonderful and most dreadful operation of supernatural agency, enquires of the spectre in the most emphatick terms why he breaks the order of nature by returning from the dead.’

<sup>2</sup> Neither Dr. Douglas nor Horace Walpole, who both went to Cock Lane, had any credulity. Walpole’s *Letters*, iii. 481. For Johnson’s state of mind see *Life*, ii. 150; iv. 298. Posterity, just at present, has enough to do in smiling at the credulity of its own period.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Many of my readers,’ says Boswell, ‘will be surprised when I mention that Johnson assured me he had never in his life been in a non-juring meeting-house.’ *Ib.* iv. 287. For Johnson’s low opinion of many of the Nonjurors and his condemnation of their ‘perverseness of integrity’ see *ib.* ii. 321.

<sup>4</sup> ‘The accession of George the Third to the throne of these kingdoms, opened a new and brighter prospect to men of literary merit, who had been honoured with no mark of royal favour in the preceding reign.’ *Ib.* i. 372. Goldsmith, Smollett and Sterne had no pension. Hume had one, but he did not need it; and so had Home and Beattie, and what was far worse, Shebbeare. Later on no pension was found for Burns.

<sup>5</sup> ‘He damns the pension *which* he takes.’

Churchill’s *Works*, i. 262.  
See *Life*, i. 429.



Not so fast, great satirist—for he had now no friends at Rome. In the sport of conversation, he would sometimes take the wrong side of a question, to try his hearers, or for his own exertions<sup>1</sup>. But this may do mischief sometimes. 'For,' without aiming at ludicrous quotation, 'he could dispute on both sides, and confute'. Among those he could trust himself with, he would enter into imaginary combat with the whigs, and has now and then shook the principles of a sturdy revolutionist<sup>2</sup>. All ingenious men can find arguments for and against every thing: and if their hearts are not good, they may do mischief with their heads. On all occasions he pressed his antagonist with so strong a front of argument, that he generally prevented his retreat. 'Every body,' said an eminent detector of imposters<sup>4</sup>, 'must be cautious how they enter the lists with Dr. Johnson.' He wrote many political tracts since his pension. Perhaps he would not have written at all, unless impelled by gratitude<sup>5</sup>. But he wrote his genuine thoughts, and imagined himself contending on the right side. A great parliamentary character seems to resolve all his

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 390, 452.

<sup>2</sup> 'He could distinguish and divide  
A hair 'twixt south and south-  
west side;  
On either which he would  
dispute,  
Confute, change hands, and  
still confute.'

*Hudibras*, i. 1. 67.

<sup>3</sup> *Revolutionist* was one who upheld the principles of 'the glorious Revolution.' The Revolution Society was 'a Club which had a yearly festival [on November 4, the birthday of the Prince of Orange] in commemoration of the events of 1688.' Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, ii. 65.

In the *Scots Magazine*, 1773, p. 613, it is recorded:—'On Nov. 15 there was a general meeting of the members of the Revolution club in Edinburgh, when several constitutional and patriotic toasts were given,

suitable to the occasion. His excellency, Sir Adolphus Oughton [the Commander in Chief in Scotland] proposed that the members should for the future on Nov. 15 meet early, and walk in procession to church, where a sermon should be preached on Revolution principles. The proposal was unanimously agreed to.' Nov. 15 was the same as Nov. 4, Old Style.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Douglas, 'the scourge of impostors, the terror of quacks,' as Goldsmith calls him in *Retaliation. Life*, i. 229.

<sup>5</sup> 'He complained to a Right Honourable friend, that his pension having been given to him as a literary character, he had been applied to by administration to write political pamphlets; and he was even so much irritated, that he declared his resolution to resign his pension.' *Ib.* ii. 317. See *ante*, i. 418.

American notions into the vain expectation of rocking a man in the cradle of a child<sup>1</sup>. Johnson recounted the number of his opponents with indifference. He wrote for that government which had been generous to him. He was too proud to call upon Lord Bute, or leave his name at his house<sup>2</sup>, though he was told it would be agreeable to his Lordship, for he said he had performed the greater difficulty, for he had taken the pension.

The last popular work, to him an easy and a pleasing one, was the writing the lives of our poets, now reprinted in four octavo volumes. He finished this business so much to the satisfaction of the booksellers that they presented him a gratuity of one hundred pounds, having paid him three hundred pounds as his price<sup>3</sup>. The Knaptons made Tindal a large present on the success of his translation of Rapin's history<sup>4</sup>. But an unwritten space must be found for what Johnson did respecting Shakspeare. For the writer and reader observe a disorder of time in this page. He took so many years to publish his edition, that his subscribers grew displeased and clamorous for their books<sup>5</sup>, which he might have prevented. For he was able to do a great deal in a little time. Though for collation he was not fit. He could not pore long on a text<sup>6</sup>. It was Columbus at the oar. It was on most

<sup>1</sup> 'We may as well think of rocking a grown man in the cradle of an infant.' Burke's *Works*, ed. 1808, iii. 189.

<sup>2</sup> He called on him to thank him for the pension. *Life*, i. 374. See Hawkins, p. 394, and *ante*, i. 418.

<sup>3</sup> He received 200 guineas by agreement, 100 guineas as a present, and £100 for revising a new edition. *Life*, iii. 111; iv. 35, n. 3; *Letters*, ii. 275. The booksellers' generosity was not great, for Johnson in his work had gone far beyond their expectations and his own intention (*Life*, iv. 35, n. 1), while the sum which he had asked for was absurdly small. He might, says Malone, have had 1,500 guineas. The booksellers, he adds, 'have probably got 5,000

guineas by this work in the course of 25 years.' *Ib.* iii. 111, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'I am credibly informed that the Knaptons will get 8 or £10,000 by that History.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1734, p. 490. They had a share also in Johnson's *Dictionary*. *Life*, i. 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* i. 319; *ante*, i. 422.

<sup>6</sup> 'The collator's province is safe and easy. . . . I collated such copies as I could procure, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. By examining the old copies I soon found that the later publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered many passages to stand unauthorised, and contented themselves with Rowe's regulation of the text. . . . These corruptions I have often silently rectified. . . . Con-

literary

literary points difficult to get himself into a willingness to work. He was idle, or unwell, or loth to act upon compulsion. But at last he tried to awake his faculties, and, like the lethargic porter of the castle of Indolence, 'to rouse himself as much, as rouse himself he can'.<sup>1</sup> He confessed that the publication of his Shakspeare answered to him in every respect. He had a very large subscription<sup>2</sup>.

Dr. Campbell, then alive in Queen-square<sup>3</sup>, who had a volume in his hand, pronounced that the preface and notes were worth the whole subscription money. You would think the text not approved or adjusted by the past or present editions, and requiring to be settled by the future. It is hoped that the next editors will have read all the books that Shakspeare read: a promise our Johnson gave, but was not able to perform<sup>4</sup>.

The reader is apprized, that this memoir is only a sketch of life, manner, and writings—

jecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle that the reading of the ancient books is probably true. . . . I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate.' Johnson's *Shakspeare*, Preface, pp. 61, 69.

'It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless edition of any great classic.' Macaulay's *Misc. Works*, ed. 1871, p. 385. 'Johnson's vigorous and comprehensive understanding threw more light on his author than all his predecessors had done.' Malone's *Shakspeare*, ed. 1821, i. 245. 'Johnson's preface and notes are distinguished by clearness of thought and diction, and by masterly common sense.' *Cambridge Shakspeare*, i. Preface, p. 36.

<sup>1</sup> 'Then taking his black staff  
he call'd his man,  
And rous'd himself as much  
as rouse himself he can.'

Canto i. 24.

<sup>2</sup> On April 16, 1757, he wrote:—  
'The subscription, though it does not quite equal perhaps my utmost hope, for when was hope not disappointed?—yet goes on tolerably.' *Letters*, i. 73. See also *ib.* i. 124, n. 2, and *ante*, ii. 320.

<sup>3</sup> 'Queen's Square is an area of a peculiar kind, it being left open on one side for the sake of the beautiful landscape formed by the hills of Highgate and Hampstead, together with the adjacent fields. A delicacy worthy [of imitation].' Dodsley's *London*, 1761, v. 240. See also *ante*, ii. 51 n.

<sup>4</sup> In his *Proposals* Johnson said:—  
'The editor will endeavour to read the books which the author read, to trace his knowledge to its source, and compare his copies with their originals.' *Works*, v. 100.

'In

'In every work regard the writer's end;  
For none can compass more than they intend'.

It looks forwards and backwards almost at the same time. Like the nightingale in Strada, 'it hits imperfect accents here and there'.<sup>1</sup> Hawkesworth, one of the Johnsonian school<sup>3</sup>, upon being asked, whether Johnson was a happy man, by a gentleman who had been just introduced to him, and wanted to know every thing about him, confessed, that he looked upon him as a most miserable being. The moment of enquiry was probably about the time he lost his wife, and sent for Hawkesworth, in the most earnest manner, to come and give him consolation and his company<sup>4</sup>.— 'And skreen me from the ills of life!' is the conclusion of his sombrous poem on November<sup>5</sup>. In happier moments (for who is

<sup>1</sup> 'Since none,' &c.

Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, l. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Addison, in *The Guardian*, No. 119, describes how in Strada's *Pro-lusions* 'Claudian had chosen for his subject the famous contest between the nightingale and the lutanist, which every one is acquainted with, especially since Mr. Phillips has so finely improved that hint in one of his Pastorals.' In this Pastoral (No. v) is found the line:—

'And adds in sweetness what she wants in strength.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Hawkesworth was Johnson's closest imitator.' *Life*, i. 252. Courtenay, in his *Lines on Johnson*, says:—

'By nature's gifts ordain'd man-kind to rule,  
He, like a Titian, form'd his brilliant school.

. . . . .  
Ingenious Hawkesworth to this school we owe,  
And scarce the pupil from the tutor know.'

In this school he places also Goldsmith, Reynolds, Burney, Malone, Steevens, Jones and Boswell. *Life*, i. 222. All of Johnson's school, ac-

cording to Reynolds, 'were distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree if they had not been acquainted with Johnson.' *Ib.* iii. 230. See *ante*, ii. 227.

<sup>4</sup> 'He deposited the remains of Mrs. Johnson in the church of Bromley, in Kent, to which he was probably led by the residence of his friend Hawkesworth at that place.' *Life*, i. 241; *ante*, i. 399.

<sup>5</sup> *The Winter's Walk* is the name of the poem. 'It is remarkable, that in this first edition of *The Winter's Walk*, the concluding line is much more Johnsonian than it was afterwards printed; for in subsequent editions, after praying Stella to "snatch him to her arms," he says, "And shield me from the ills of life."

Whereas in the first edition it is "And hide me from the sight of life." *Life*, i. 179.

*The Winter's Walk*, I feel sure, is not by Johnson, though he may have supplied Hawkesworth, who probably wrote it, with a line or two. *Ib.* p. 178, n. 2.

not subject to every skyey influence, and the evil of the hour<sup>1</sup>?) he would argue, and prove it in a sort of dissertation, that there was, generally and individually, more of natural and moral good, than of the contrary<sup>2</sup>. He asserted, that no man could pronounce he did not feel more pleasure than misery. Every body would not answer in the affirmative; for an ounce of pain outweighs a pound of pleasure. There are people who wish they had never been born—to whom life is a disease—and whose apprehensions of dying pains and of futurity embitter every thing. The reader must not think it impertinent to remark, that Johnson did not choose to pass his whole life in celibacy. Perhaps the raising up a posterity may be a debt and duty all men owe to those who have lived before them. Johnson had a daughter, who died before its mother, if this pen is not mistaken<sup>3</sup>. When these were gone, he lost his hold on life, for he never married again. He has expressed a surprize that Sir Isaac Newton continued totally unacquainted with the female sex, which is asserted by Voltaire, from the information of Cheselden<sup>4</sup>, and is admitted to be true. For curiosity, the first and most durable of the passions, might have led him to overcome that inexperience. This pen may as well finish this last point in the words of Fontenelle, that Sir Isaac never was married, and perhaps never had time to think of it<sup>5</sup>. Whether the sun-shine of the world upon our author raised his drooping spirits, or that the lenient hand of time removed something from him, or that his health meliorated by mingling more with the croud of mankind, or not, he however apparently acquired more chearfulness, and became more fit for

<sup>1</sup> 'A breath thou art,  
Servile to all the skiey influences  
That do this habitation where  
thou keep'st  
Hourly afflict.'

*Measure for Measure*, Act iii. sc. i.  
l. 7. For the effect of 'the skiey influences' on Johnson see *Life*, i. 332.

<sup>2</sup> For his unhappy thoughts on life see *ib.* i. 213, 331, *n.* 6, 343; ii. 125; iv. 300; *ante*, ii. 256.

<sup>3</sup> He never had a child.

<sup>4</sup> *Œuvres de Voltaire*, ed. 1819, xxiv. 70.

<sup>5</sup> 'Il ne s'est point marié, et peut-être n'a-t-il pas eu le loisir d'y penser jamais, abîmé d'abord dans des études profondes et continuelles pendant la force de l'âge, occupé ensuite d'une charge importante, et même de sa grande considération, qui ne lui laissait sentir ni vuide dans sa vie ni besoin d'une société domestique.' *Éloge de Newton*, ed. 1728, p. 36.

the

the labours of life and his literary function<sup>1</sup>. But he certainly did not communicate to every intruder every uneasy sensation of mind and body<sup>2</sup>. Who, it may be asked, can determine of the pleasure and pain of others? True and solemn are the lines of Prior, in his *Solomon*<sup>3</sup>:

‘Who breathes must suffer, and who thinks must mourn;  
And he alone is blest, who ne’er was born.’

Johnson thought he had no right to complain of his lot in life, or of having been disappointed: the world had not used him ill: it had not broke its word with him: it had promised him nothing: he aspired to no elevation: he had fallen from no height<sup>4</sup>. Lord Gower endeavoured to obtain for him, by the interest of Swift, the mastership of a grammar-school of small income, for which Johnson was not qualified by the statutes to become a candidate. His lordship’s letter, published some years ago, is to the honour of the subject: in praise of his abilities and integrity, and in commiseration of his distressed situation<sup>5</sup>. Johnson wished, for a moment, to fill the chair of a professor, at Oxford, then become vacant, but he never applied for it. He was offered a good living, by Mr. Langton, if he would accept it, and take orders: but he chose not to put off his lay habit<sup>6</sup>. He would have made an admirable library-keeper<sup>7</sup>: like

<sup>1</sup> ‘It pleased God to grant him almost thirty years of life, after this time [the death of his wife]; and once, when he was in a placid frame of mind, he was obliged to own to me that he had enjoyed happier days, and had many more friends, since that gloomy hour than before.’ *Life*, i. 299.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell, writing of the year 1769, says:—‘His *Meditations* strongly prove that he suffered much both in body and mind. . . . Every generous and grateful heart . . . now that his unhappiness is certainly known, must respect that dignity of character which prevented him from complaining.’ *Ib.* ii. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. iii. l. 240.

<sup>4</sup> ‘JOHNSON. “Sir, I have never complained of the world, nor do I think that I have reason to complain.” *Life*, iv. 116. ‘The world is not so unjust or unkind as it is peevishly represented.’ *Letters*, ii. 215. See also *ante*, i. 315.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 373; *Life*, i. 133.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, ii. 107; *Life*, i. 320.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Mr. Levet this day shewed me Dr. Johnson’s library, which was contained in two garrets over his Chambers. I found a number of good books, but very dusty and in great confusion. The floor was strewn with manuscript leaves, in Johnson’s own hand-writing.’ *Life*, i. 435.

Casaubon, Magliabechi, or Bentley<sup>1</sup>. But he belonged to the world at large. Talking on the topic of what his inclinations or faculties might have led him to have been, had he been bred to the profession of the law, he has said he should have wished for the Office of Master of the Rolls<sup>2</sup>. He gave into this idea in table-talk, partly serious and partly jocose, for it was only a manner he had of describing himself to his friends without vanity of his parts (for he was above being vain) or envy of the honourable stations engaged by other men of merit. He would correct any compositions of his friends (*habes confitentem*)<sup>3</sup>, and dictate on any subject on which they wanted information<sup>4</sup>. He could have been an orator, if he would<sup>5</sup>. On account of his intimacy with Dr. Dodd, for whom he made a bargain with the booksellers for his edition of the Bible, he wrote a petition to the Crown for mercy, after his condemnation<sup>6</sup>. The letter he composed for the translator of Ariosto, that was sent to Mr. Hastings in Bengal, is esteemed a master-piece<sup>7</sup>. Dr. Warton, of Win-

<sup>1</sup> Casaubon was King's Librarian in Paris, and Bentley in London; Magliabecchi was the Grand Duke's Librarian at Florence.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sir William Scott informs me, that upon the death of the late Lord Lichfield, who was Chancellor of the University of Oxford, he said to Johnson, "What a pity it is, Sir, that you did not follow the profession of the law. You might have been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, and attained to the dignity of the peerage; and now that the title of Lichfield, your native city, is extinct you might have had it." Johnson, upon this, seemed much agitated; and, in an angry tone, exclaimed, "Why will you vex me by suggesting this, when it is too late?"' *Life*, iii. 309.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 332; ii. 7. Tyers was the author of two or three books. 'That great man [Dr. Johnson] has acknowledged behind his back that "Tyers always tells him something

he did not know before."' Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, viii. 88 n.

<sup>4</sup> See *Life*, ii. 183, 196, 242, 372-3; iii. 200; iv. 74, 129, for legal arguments dictated to Boswell.

<sup>5</sup> 'When Sir Joshua Reynolds told him that Mr. Edmund Burke had said, that if he had come early into parliament, he certainly would have been the greatest speaker that ever was there, Johnson exclaimed, "I should like to try my hand now." . . . Sir William Scott mentioned that Johnson had told him that he had several times tried to speak in the Society of Arts and Sciences, but "had found he could not get on."' *Ib.* ii. 138.

<sup>6</sup> Dodd published in 1771 a *Commentary on the Old and New Testament*. Johnson had been but once in Dodd's company, and that was in 1750. *Life*, iii. 140. It is most unlikely that he made any bargain for him. For his petition see *ib.* iii. 142; *ante*, i. 432; ii. 282.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, iv. 70.

chester, talked of it as the very best he ever read. He could have been eminent, if he chose it, in letter writing, a faculty in which, according to Sprat, his Cowley excelled<sup>1</sup>. His epistolary and confidential correspondence would make an agreeable publication, but the world will never be trusted with it<sup>2</sup>. He wrote as well in verse as in prose. Though he composed so harmoniously in Latin and English, he had no ear for music<sup>3</sup>: and though he lived in such habits of intimacy with Sir Joshua Reynolds, and once intended to have written the lives of the painters, he had no eye, nor perhaps taste for a picture, nor a landscape<sup>4</sup>. He renewed his Greek some years ago, for which he found no occasion for twenty years. He owned that many knew more Greek than himself; but that his grammar would show he had once taken pains. Sir William Jones, one of the most enlightened of the sons of men, as Johnson described him, has often said, he knew a great deal of Greek<sup>5</sup>. With French authors he was familiar. He had lately read over the works of Boileau<sup>6</sup>. He passed a judgment on Sherlock's French and English letters, and told him there was more French in his English, than English in his French<sup>7</sup>. His curiosity would have led him to read Italian, even if Baretti had not been his acquaintance<sup>8</sup>. Latin was as natural to him as English. He seemed to know the readiest

<sup>1</sup> Johnson says of Sprat's *Life of Cowley* that 'his zeal of friendship or ambition of eloquence has produced a funeral oration rather than a history.' *Works*, vii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Less than four years later Mrs. Piozzi published more than 300 of his letters; she was followed in three years by Boswell, who gave nearly 340 more. There are now more than a thousand in print.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 103.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 214.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, iv. 384; *ante*, i. 183.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 334.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Sherlock first published in Italian and in French the work which, in 1781, he brought out in English under the title of *Letters of an English Traveller translated*

*from the French*. Horace Walpole wrote of him (*Letters*, vii. 462):— 'His Italian is ten times worse than his French, and more bald.'

<sup>8</sup> He had learnt Italian before he knew Baretti. *Life*, i. 115, 156. He studied it also later in life. In 1776 he 'purposed to apply vigorously to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues.' *Ante*, i. 77. In 1781 he recorded:— 'Having prayed, I purpose to employ the next six weeks upon the Italian language for my settled study.' *Ante*, i. 99. Less than four months before his death he wrote to Sastres, the Italian master:— 'I have hope of standing the English winter, and of seeing you, and reading Petrarch at Bolt Court.' *Letters*, ii. 417.



road to knowledge, and to languages, their conductors. He made such progress in Hebrew, in a few lessons, that surprized his guide in that tongue. In company with Dr. Barnard and the fellows at Eton, he astonished them all with the display of his critical, classical, and prosodical treasures, and also himself, for he protested, on his return, he did not know he was so rich<sup>1</sup>.

Christopher Smart was at first well received by Johnson<sup>2</sup>. This writer owed his acquaintance with our author, which lasted thirty years, to the introduction of that bard. Johnson, whose hearing was not always good, understood he called him by the name of Thyer; that eminent scholar, librarian of Manchester, and a Nonjuror. This mistake was rather beneficial than otherwise to the person introduced. Johnson had been much indisposed all that day, and repeated a psalm he had just translated, during his affliction, into Latin verse, and did not commit to paper. For so retentive was the memory of this man, that he could always recover whatever he lent to that faculty. Smart in return recited some of his own Latin compositions. He had translated with success, and to Mr. Pope's *satisfaction*, his St. Cecilian Ode<sup>3</sup>. Come when you would, early or late, for he desired to be called from bed, when a visitor was at the door; the tea-table was sure to be spread, *Te veniente die, Te decedente*<sup>4</sup>.—With tea he cheered himself in the morning, with tea he solaced himself in the evening<sup>5</sup>; for in these, or in equivalent words, he exprest himself in a printed letter to Jonas Hanway, who had just told the public that tea was the ruin of the nation, and of the nerves of every one who drank it<sup>6</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> For Dr. Barnard see *ante*, i. 168, and for the invitation given to Johnson to visit Eton, *Life*, v. 97. Boswell visited the College in 1789. 'I was asked by the Headmaster to dine at the Fellows' table, and made a creditable figure. . . . I had my classical quotations very ready.' *Ib.* v. 15, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Tyers seems to imply that later on Johnson did not receive Smart well. At all events he befriended him. *Ib.* ii. 345.

<sup>3</sup> 'When Smart offered himself as a candidate for a university scholarship he is said to have translated Pope's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* into Latin.' Chalmers's *Biog. Dict.* xxviii. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 466.

<sup>5</sup> 'Who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight, and with tea welcomes the morning.' *Life*, i. 313, n. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* i. 313.

pun upon his favourite liquor he heard with a smile. Though his time seemed to be bespoke, and quite engrossed, it is certain his house was open to all his acquaintance, new and old<sup>1</sup>. His amanuensis has given up his pen, the printer's devil has waited on the stairs for a proof sheet, and the press has often stood still. His visitors were delighted and instructed. No subject ever came amiss to him. He could transfer his thoughts from one thing to another with the most accommodating facility. He had the art, for which Locke was famous, of leading people to talk on their favourite subjects, and on what they knew best<sup>2</sup>. By this he acquired a great deal of information. What he once heard he rarely forgot. They gave him their best conversation, and he generally made them pleased with themselves, for endeavouring to please him. Poet Smart used to relate, 'that the first conversation with him was of such variety and length, that it began with poetry and ended at fluxions.' He always talked as if he was talking upon oath<sup>3</sup>. He was the wisest person, and had the most knowledge in ready cash<sup>4</sup>; this writer had the honour to be acquainted with—Here a little pause must be endured. The poor hand that holds the pen is benumbed by the frost as much as by a torpedo<sup>5</sup>. It is cold within, by the

<sup>1</sup> 'Johnson, during the whole course of his life, had no shyness, real or affected, but was easy of access to all who were properly recommended, and even wished to see numbers at his *levee*, as his morning circle of company might, with strict propriety, be called.' *Life*, i. 247.

<sup>2</sup> 'Locke felt pleasure in conversing with all sorts of people, and tried to profit by their information, which arose . . . from the opinion he entertained that there was nobody from whom something useful could not be got. And indeed by this means he had learned so many things concerning the arts and trade, that he seemed to have made them his particular study.' King's *Life of Locke*, ed. 1858, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> JOHNSON. "Mrs. Thrale's mother

said of me what flattered me much. A clergyman was complaining of want of society in the country where he lived; and said, 'They talk of *runts*;' (that is, young cows). 'Sir, (said Mrs. Salusbury,) Mr. Johnson would learn to talk of runts.'" *Life*, iii. 337.

Tyers forgets to record his own description of Johnson's talk. 'Tom Tyers described me the best:—"Sir (said he) you are like a ghost; you never speak till you are spoken to."' *Ib.* iii. 307; *ante*, i. 290.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 434; *ante*, i. 458.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, ii. 256.

<sup>5</sup> 'Tom Birch is as brisk as a bee in conversation; but no sooner does he take a pen in his hand, than it becomes a torpedo to him, and benumbs all his faculties.' *Ib.* i. 159.

fire-side

fire-side, and a white world abroad <sup>1</sup>. His reader has a moment's leisure to censure or commend the harvest of anecdote that is brought in, for his sake; and if he has more reading than usual, may remark for or against it in the manner of the Cardinal to Ariosto: 'All this may be true, extraordinary, and entertaining; but where the deuce did you pick it all up?' The writer perhaps comes within the proverbial observation, that the inquisitive person ends often in the character of the tell-tale. Johnson's advice was consulted on all occasions. He was known to be a good casuist <sup>3</sup>, and therefore had many cases for his judgment <sup>4</sup>. It is notorious, that some men had the wickedness to over-reach him, and to injure him, till they were found out. Lauder was of the number, who made, at the time, all the friends of Milton his enemies <sup>5</sup>. There is nobody so likely to be imposed upon as a good man. His conversation, in the judgment of several, was thought to be equal to his correct writings <sup>6</sup>. Perhaps the tongue will throw out more animated expressions than the pen. He said the most common things in the newest manner. He always commanded attention and regard. His person, though unadorned with dress, and even deformed by neglect, made you expect something, and you was hardly ever disappointed. His manner was interesting; the tone of his voice and the sincerity of his expressions, even when they did not captivate your affections, or carry conviction, prevented contempt. It must be owned, his countenance, on some occasions, resembled too much the medallic likeness of Magliabechi, as exhibited before the printed account of him by Mr. Spence <sup>7</sup>. No man dared to

<sup>1</sup> Tyers wrote his narrative directly after Johnson's death. For 'the white world' see *Letters*, ii. 433.

<sup>2</sup> 'Je ne sais quel plaisant a fait courir le premier ce mot prétendu du Cardinal d'Este: *Messer Lodovico, dove avete pigliato tante coglionerie?*' *Œuvres de Voltaire*, ed. 1819, xxxv. 434.

<sup>3</sup> For his casuistry in the defence of duelling see *Life*, ii. 179, 226; iv. 211; and of dining with two Bishops in *Passion Week*, *ib.* iv. 88.

<sup>4</sup> *Ante*, i. 300.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 393.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, ii. 95, n. 2; iv. 236; *ante*, i. 348.

<sup>7</sup> 'Magliabechi had almost the air of a savage, and even affected it; together with a cynical or contemptuous smile.' Spence's *Parallel*. See *Fugitive Pieces on Various Subjects*, ed. 1761, ii. 332, where the likeness is given. 'Magliabechi's nose was aquiline, and his face generally drawn into a kind of cynical take

take liberties with him, nor flatly contradict him; for he could repel any attack, having always about him the weapons of ridicule, of wit, and of argument<sup>1</sup>. It must be owned, that some who had the desire to be admitted to him, thought him too dogmatical, and as exacting too much homage to his opinions, and came no more. For they said, while he presided in his library, surrounded by his admirers, he would, 'like Cato, give his little senate laws<sup>2</sup>.' He had great knowledge in the science of human nature, and of the fashions and customs of life, and knew the world well. He had often in his mouth this line of Pope,

'The proper study of mankind is man<sup>3</sup>.'

He was desirous of surveying life in all its modes and forms, and in all climates. Twenty years ago he offered to attend his friend Vansittart to India, who was invited there to make a fortune; but it did not take place<sup>4</sup>. He talked much of travelling into Poland, to observe the life of the Palatines<sup>5</sup>, the

grin.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1759, p. 52. See also *ante*, ii. 87, 141.

<sup>1</sup> 'When exasperated by contradiction Johnson was apt to treat his opponents with too much acrimony, as "Sir, you don't see your way through that question."—"Sir, you talk the language of ignorance."' *Life*, ii. 122. Boswell records how Johnson, 'determined to be master of the field, had recourse to the device which Goldsmith imputed to him in the witty words of one of Cibber's comedies: "There is no arguing with Johnson; for when his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it."' *Ib.* ii. 100. See also *ib.* iv. 274; v. 292. Goldsmith referred to the following passage in *The Refusal*, Act i. sc. 1 (Colley Cibber's *Plays*, ed. 1777, iv. 22):—

'GRANGER. "Pr'ythee, *Witling*, does not thy Assurance sometimes meet with a Repartee, that only lights

upon the Outside of thy Head?"

'WITLING. "O! your Servant, Sir. What! now your Fire's gone, you would knock me down with the Butt-end, would you?"'

<sup>2</sup> Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, l. 209.

<sup>3</sup> *Essay on Man*, ii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> See *Life*, iii. 20, where Johnson tells a story of a friend who 'got a considerable appointment [in the East Indies]. I had some intention of accompanying him. Had I thought then as I do now, I should have gone.' In 1769 Mr. Vansittart was sent to India with two others as Supervisors. Their ship was lost on the way and nothing was ever known of their fate. *Annual Register*, 1769, i. 53; 1773, i. 66.

<sup>5</sup> 'The Palatines and Castellans were governors of the palatinates or provinces, and held the office for life; the palatine having the direction of the whole province, like our account

account of which struck his curiosity very much. His *Rasselas* it is reported, he wrote to raise a purse of pecuniary assistance to his aged mother at Lichfield<sup>1</sup>. The first title of his manuscript, was *Prince of Ethiopia*<sup>2</sup>. Mr. Bruce is expected to give us a history of both these countries<sup>3</sup>. The Happy valley he would hardly be able to find in Abyssinia. Dr. Young used to say, that '*Rasselas* was a lamp of wisdom'<sup>4</sup>. He there displays an uncommon capacity for remark, and makes the best use of the description of travellers. It is an excellent romance. But his journey into the Western Islands is an original thing. He hoped, as he said, when he came back, that no Scotchman had any right to be angry with what he wrote<sup>5</sup>. It is a book written without the assistance of books. He said, 'it was his wish and endeavour not to make a single quotation'<sup>6</sup>. His curiosity must have been excessive, and his strength undecayed to accomplish a journey of such length, and subject to such inconvenience. His book was eagerly read. One of the first men of the age<sup>7</sup> told Mr. Garrick, 'that he would forgive Johnson all his wrong notions respecting America, on account of his writing that book.' He thought himself the hardier for travelling. He took a tour into France<sup>8</sup>, and meditated another into Italy<sup>9</sup> or Portugal, for the sake of the climate. But Dr. Brocklesby, his friend and physician (and who that knows him can wish for more companionable and more professional knowledge?) conjured him, by every argument

lord-lieutenant, the castellan of a district.' Morfill's *Poland*, p. 346.

For Johnson's love of travelling see *Life*, iii. 449.

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.* i. 341; *ante*, i. 285, 415.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson wrote to Mr. Strahan: — 'The title will be "The Choice of Life or The History of . . . Prince of Abissinia." *Letters*, i. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Though Bruce had returned to England in 1774 he did not publish his *Travels* till 1790. *Ante*, i. 365 *n.*; ii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Young greatly admired the *Rambler*. *Life*, i. 215.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* ii. 306; *ante*, i. 430.

<sup>6</sup> Of Swift Johnson wrote: — 'It

was said in a preface to one of the Irish editions that Swift had never been known to take a single thought from any writer, ancient or modern. This is not literally true; but perhaps no writer can easily be found that has borrowed so little, or that in all his excellencies and all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original.' *Works*, viii. 228.

Johnson's book has the same claim to originality.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Burke, who praised the book. *Ante*, ii. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Life*, ii. 389.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.* ii. 428; iv. 326; *ante*, i. 263.

in

in his power, not to go abroad in the state of his health<sup>1</sup>; but that if he was resolved on the first, and wished for something additional to his income, desired he would permit him to accommodate him out of his fortune with one hundred pounds a-year, during his travels, to be paid by instalments<sup>2</sup>.

'Ye little stars hide your diminished heads<sup>3</sup>.'

The reply to this generosity was to this effect: 'That he would not be obliged to any person's liberality, but to his King's<sup>4</sup>.' The continuance of this design to go abroad, occasioned the application for an increase of pension, that is so honourable to those who applied for it, and to the Lord Chancellor who gave him leave to draw on his banker for any sum<sup>5</sup>. With the courage of a man, Johnson demanded to know of Brocklesby if his recovery was impossible? Being answered in the affirmative; 'then,' says he, 'I will take no more opium, and give up my physicians<sup>6</sup>.'

At last he said, 'if I am worse, I cannot go, if I am better I need not go, but if I continue neither better nor worse, I am as well where I am.' The writer of this sketch could wish to have committed to memory or paper all the wise and sensible things that dropped from his lips. If the one could have been Xenophon, the other was a Socrates.—His benevolence to mankind was known to all who knew him. Though so declared a friend to the Church of England and even a friend to the Convocation<sup>7</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> 'My journey to the continent . . . was never much encouraged by my physicians.' *Life*, iv. 349.

<sup>2</sup> 'As an instance of extraordinary liberality of friendship, he told us, that Dr. Brocklesby had upon this occasion offered him a hundred a year for his life. A grateful tear started into his eye, as he spoke this in a faltering tone.' *Ib.* iv. 338. See *ib. n. 2* for Brocklesby's 'liberality of friendship' towards Burke, and *ante*, i. 443.

<sup>3</sup> 'At whose sight all the stars Hide their diminish'd heads.'

*Paradise Lost*, iv. 34.

'Ye little stars! hide your diminish'd rays.'

Pope, *Moral Essays*, iii. 282.

<sup>4</sup> Windham says (*post*, p. 388), that when Dr. Brocklesby made this offer 'Johnson pressed his hands and said, "God bless you through Jesus Christ, but I will take no money but from my sovereign." This, if I mistake not, was told the King through West.'

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 442.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, iv. 415.

This was a few days before his death. Tyers in the next paragraph returns to the project of the visit to Italy formed some months earlier.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* i. 464; iv. 277.

Smollett, after describing the meeting of Convocation in 1717, continues:—'The Convocation has not

it assuredly was not in his wish to persecute for speculative notions<sup>1</sup>. He used to say he had no quarrel with any order of men, unless they disbelieved in revelation and a future state<sup>2</sup>. He would indeed have sided with Sacheverell against Daniel Burgess<sup>3</sup>, if he thought the Church was in danger. His hand and his heart were always open to charity. The objects under his own roof were only a few of the subjects for relief. He was at the head of subscription in cases of distress. His guinea, as he said of another man of a bountiful disposition, was always ready. He wrote an exhortation to public bounty. He drew up a paper to recommend the French prisoners, in the last war but one, to the English benevolence<sup>4</sup>; which was of service. He implored the hand of benevolence for others<sup>5</sup>; even when he almost seemed a proper object of it himself.

Like his hero Savage, while in company with him, he is supposed to have formerly strolled about the streets almost houseless<sup>6</sup>, and as if he was obliged to go without the cheerful meal of the day, or to wander about for one, as is reported of Homer.

been permitted to sit and do business since that period.' *History of England*, ed. 1800, ii. 358.

'The practice continues to the present day [1837] of summoning the clergy to meet in convocation whenever a new parliament is called, and the forms of election are gone through. . . . It is the usual practice for the King to prorogue the meeting when it is about to proceed to any business.' Penny *Cyclopaedia*, 1837, vii. 489.

'The spirituality at last aroused itself from its long repose in 1852. . . . The first action of Convocation as a deliberative body commenced in 1861.' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th ed., vi. 329.

<sup>1</sup> 'In short, Sir, I have got no further than this: Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it. Martyrdom

is the test.' *Life*, iv. 12. See also *ib.* ii. 250, 254.

<sup>2</sup> 'Every man who attacks my belief, diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy; and I am angry with him who makes me uneasy.' *Ib.* iii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* i. 39. Hearne recorded on March 4, 1709-10:—'The mob are so zealous for Dr. Sacheverell that they have pulled down several meeting-houses of the dissenters in London, amongst which is the meeting-house of that old presbyterian rogue Daniel Burgess.' *Reliquiae Hernianae*, 1869, i. 187. See *The Tatler*, No. 66 (by Swift), where Burgess is ridiculed.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 353.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* ii. 379; iii. 124; iv. 283, 408 n.; *Letters*, ii. 64, 66, 113.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, i. 162; *ante*, i. 371.

If this were true, it is no wonder if he was an unknown, or uninquired after for a long time :

‘Slow rises worth by poverty depressed !’

When once distinguished, as he observes of Ascham, he gained admirers<sup>2</sup>. He was fitted by nature for a critic. His *Lives of the Poets* (like all his biographical pieces) are well written. He gives us the pulp without the husks. He has told their personal history very well. But every thing is not new. Perhaps what Mr. Steevens helped him to, has increased the number of the best anecdotes<sup>3</sup>. But his criticisms of their works are of the most worth, and the greatest novelty. His perspicacity was very extraordinary. He was able to take measure of every intellectual object, and to see all round it. If he chose to plume himself as an author, he might on account of the gift of intuition,

‘The brightest feather in the eagle’s wing.’

He has been censured for want of taste or good nature in what he says of Prior<sup>4</sup>, Gray<sup>5</sup>, Lyttelton<sup>6</sup>, Hammond<sup>7</sup>, and others, and to have praised some pieces that nobody thought highly of. It was a fault in our critic too often to take occasion to show himself superior to his subject, and also to trample upon it. There is no talking about taste. Perhaps Johnson, who spoke from his last feelings, forgot those of his youth. The love verses of Waller and others have no charms for old age. Even Prior’s *Henry and Emma*, which pleased the old and surly Dennis<sup>8</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Johnson’s *London*, l. 121.

Goldsmith wrote to his brother Henry in 1759 :—‘The greatest merit in a state of poverty would only serve to make the possessor ridiculous—may distress but cannot relieve him. Frugality, and even avarice, in the lower orders of mankind, are true ambition.’ Prior’s *Goldsmith*, i. 300.

<sup>2</sup> ‘A man once distinguished soon gains admirers.’ *Works*, vi. 512.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Mr. Steevens appears, from the papers in my possession, to have supplied him with some anecdotes and quotations.’ *Life*, iv. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Cowper wrote soon after the publication of the *Lives* :—‘Prior’s reputation as an author, who, with much labour indeed, but with admirable success, has embellished all his poems with the most charming verse, stood unshaken till Johnson thrust his head against it.’ Cowper’s *Works*, ed. 1836, iv. 175.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 479.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, i. 257 ; ii. 193.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, v. 268.

<sup>8</sup> Dennis was only seven years older than Prior.

‘Mrs. Thrale disputed with Dr.

had



had no charms for him. Of Gray he always spoke as he wrote, and called his poetry artificial<sup>1</sup>. If word and thought go together the odes of Gray were not to the satisfaction of our critic. But what composition can stand this sharp-sighted critic? He made some fresh observations on Milton, by placing him in a new point of view: and if he has shown more of his excellencies than Addison does, he accompanies them with more defects. He took no critic from the shelf, neither Aristotle, Bossu, nor Boileau. He hardly liked to quote, much more to steal. He drew his judgments from the principles of human nature, of which the *Rambler* is full, before the *Elements of Criticism*, by Lord Kames<sup>2</sup>, made their appearance.

It may be inserted here, that Johnson, soon after his coming to London, had thought of writing a History of the revival of Learning<sup>3</sup>. The booksellers had other service to offer him<sup>4</sup>. But he never undertook it. The proprietors of the *Universal History*<sup>5</sup> wished him to take any part in that voluminous work. But he declined their offer. His last employers wanted him to undertake the life of Spenser<sup>6</sup>. But he said Warton had left

Johnson on the merit of Prior. He attacked him powerfully; said he wrote of love like a man who had never felt it: his love verses were college verses; and he repeated the song "Alexis shunn'd his fellow swains," &c., in so ludicrous a manner, as to make us all wonder how any one could have been pleased with such fantastical stuff.' *Life*, ii. 78.

'The greatest of all Prior's amorous essays is *Henry and Emma*; a dull and tedious dialogue.' *Works*, viii. 16.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 191; ii. 52, 320; *Life*, i. 402; ii. 164, 327, 334; iv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 393; ii. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* iv. 381, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'The booksellers gave it out as a piece of literary news, that he had an inclination to translate the *Lives of Plutarch* from the Greek. It appears from his literary memorandum-book that this was one of the

tasks he assigned himself.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 86.

'Among Johnson's papers was found a translation from Sallust of the *Bellum Catilinarium*, so flatly and insipidly rendered that the suffering it to appear would have been an indelible disgrace to his memory.' Hawkins, p. 541.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, ii. 432.

<sup>6</sup> His 'last employers' were the proprietors of the *Lives*.

See *ante*, ii. 192, where Hannah More records:—'Johnson told me he had been with the King that morning, who enjoined him to add Spenser to his *Lives of the Poets*.'

He told Nichols, who asked him 'to favour the world, and gratify his sovereign, by a Life of Spenser, that he would readily have done so had he been able to obtain any new materials for the purpose.' *Life*, iv. 410.

little

little or nothing for him to do. A system of morals next was proposed<sup>1</sup>. But perhaps he chose to promise nothing more. He thought, as, like the running horse in Horace<sup>2</sup>, he had done his best, he should give up the race and the chase. His dependent Levett died suddenly under his roof. He preserved his name from oblivion, by writing an epitaph for him, which shows that his poetical fire was not extinguished, and is so appropriate, that it could belong to no other person in the world<sup>3</sup>. Johnson said, that the remark of appropriation was just criticism: his friend was induced to pronounce, that he would not have so good an epitaph written for himself<sup>4</sup>. Pope has nothing to equal it in his sepulchral poetry. When he dined with Mr. Wilkes, at a private table in the city, their mutual altercations were forgot, at least for that day<sup>5</sup>. Johnson did not remember the sharpness of a paper against his description or definition of an alphabetical point animadverted upon in his dictionary by that man of acuteness<sup>6</sup>; who, in his turn, forgot the severity of a pamphlet of Johnson<sup>7</sup>. All was, during this meal, a reciprocation of wit and good humour. During the annual contest in the city, Johnson confessed, that Wilkes would make a very good Chamberlain<sup>8</sup>. When Johnson (who had said that he would as soon dine with

<sup>1</sup> Johnson had at one time of his life projected '*A Comparison of Philosophical and Christian Morality, by sentences collected from the moralists and fathers.*' *Life*, iv. 381, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 'Solve senescentem mature sanus equum.'

'Loose from the rapid car your aged horse.'

FRANCIS, HORACE, *Epis.* i. 1. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 137.

'The difficulty in writing epitaphs is to give a particular and appropriate praise. This, however, is not always to be performed, whatever be the diligence or ability of the writer; for the greater part of mankind have no character at all.' *Works*, viii. 355.

<sup>4</sup> For Parr's epitaph on Johnson see *Life*, iv. 424; and for his vanity about it, *ib.* 444.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* iii. 64. Wilkes, a year later, attacked Johnson in Parliament. *Ib.* iii. 79, n. 1. 'Lord Mansfield, we are informed on the unquestionable authority of Mr. Andrew Strahan, was of opinion that "Mr. Wilkes was the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman, and the best scholar he ever knew."' Nichols's *Lit. Anec.* ix. 479 n. See *ib.* for 'Wilkes's *Life of himself*. It was not forthcoming. The covers of the book remained; but the leaves were all cut out.'

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, i. 300.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* ii. 135, n. 1; iii. 64.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* iv. 101, n. 2; *Letters*, i. 408.

*Jack Ketch* as with *Jack Wilkes*<sup>1</sup>) could sit at the same table with this patriot, it may be concluded he did not write his animosities in marble<sup>2</sup>.—Johnson was famous for saying what are called *good things*. Mr. Boswell, who listened to him for so many years, has probably remembered many. He mentioned many of them to Paoli<sup>3</sup>, who paid him the last tribute of a visit to his grave. If Johnson had had as good eyes as Boswell he might have seen more trees in Scotland, perhaps, than he mentions<sup>4</sup>.

This is not the record-office for his sayings: but a few must be recollected here. For Plutarch has not thought it beneath his dignity to relate some things of this sort, of some of his heroes<sup>5</sup>. 'Pray Dr. Johnson' (said somebody) 'is the master of the mansion at Streatham a man of much conversation, or is he only wise and silent?' 'He strikes,' says Johnson, 'once an hour, and I suppose strikes right<sup>6</sup>.' Mr. Thrale left him a legacy<sup>7</sup>, and made him an executor. It came to Johnson's ears, that the great bookseller in the Strand, on receiving the last manuscript sheet of his Dictionary, had said, 'Give Johnson his money, for I thank God I have done with him.' The philologist took care that he should receive his compliments, and be informed, 'he was extremely glad he returned thanks to God for any thing<sup>8</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> 'I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, Sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch."' *Life*, iii. 66. Boswell adds in a note:—'This has been circulated as if actually said by Johnson; when the truth is, it was only *supposed* by me.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Some write their wrongs in marble; he more just  
Stooped down serene and wrote them in the dust.'

*Ante*, ii. 267.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 432 n.

<sup>4</sup> 'He expressed some displeasure at me for not observing sufficiently

the various objects upon the road. "If I had your eyes, Sir (said he), I should count the passengers."' *Life*, iv. 311.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell also shelters himself under the example of Plutarch. *Ib.* v. 414.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, ii. 169. 'Johnson said, he was angry at Thrale, for sitting at General Oglethorpe's without speaking. He censured a man for degrading himself to a non-entity.' *Life*, v. 277.

<sup>7</sup> £200. *Ib.* iv. 86.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Millar was the bookseller. He would not have said, 'Give Johnson his money,' for 'Johnson had received all the copy-money by different drafts a considerable time before he had finished his task.' *Ib.* i. 287.

Well known is the rude reproof he gave to a talker, who asserted, that every individual in Scotland had literature. (By the by, modern statesmen do not wish that every one in the King's dominions should be able to write and read<sup>1</sup>.) 'The general learning of the Scotch nation' (said he, in a bad humour) 'resembles the condition of a ship's crew, condemned to short allowance of provisions; every one has a mouthful, and nobody a belly full<sup>2</sup>.' Of this enough. His size has been described to be large: his mind and person both on a large scale. His face and features are happily preserved by Reynolds and by Nollekens<sup>3</sup>. His elocution was energetic, and, in the words of a great scholar in the north, who did not like him, he spoke in the Lincolnshire dialect<sup>4</sup>. His articulation became worse, by some dental losses. But he never was silent on that account, nor unwilling to talk. It never was said of him, that he was overtaken with liquor<sup>5</sup>, a declaration Bishop Hoadly makes of himself. But he owned that he drank his bottle at a certain time of life<sup>6</sup>. Lions, and the fiercest of the wild creation, drink nothing but water. Like Solomon, who tried so many things for curiosity and delight, he renounced strong liquors, (strong liquors, according to Fenton, of all kinds

<sup>1</sup> For Johnson's defence of popular education see *Life*, ii. 188.

<sup>2</sup> 'He defended his remark upon the general insufficiency of education in Scotland; and confirmed to me the authenticity of his witty saying on the learning of the Scotch:—"Their learning is like bread in a besieged town; every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal."' *Ib.* ii. 363; *ante*, i. 321; ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 421, n. 2; *Letters*, ii. 59.

<sup>4</sup> The 'great scholar' was perhaps Lord Monboddo; for his dislike of Johnson see *Life*, iv. 273, n. 1. Johnson's accent, such as it was, was of course that of Staffordshire. 'Sir,' he said, 'when people watch me narrowly, and I do not watch myself,

they will find me out to be of a particular county.' *Ib.* ii. 159.

Boswell remarked at Lichfield that 'there was pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair*; *once* was pronounced *woonse*, instead of *wunse* or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of those provincial accents.' *Ib.* ii. 464. At Aberdeen Boswell records:—"I was sensible to-day, to an extraordinary degree, of Dr. Johnson's excellent English pronunciation." *Ib.* v. 85.

<sup>5</sup> See *ante*, ii. 322 n., where he said:—"I used to slink home when I had drunk too much."

<sup>6</sup> 'I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this.' *Life*, iii. 245.

were the aversion of Milton<sup>1</sup>); and he might have said, as that King is made to do by Prior,

'I drank, I lik'd it not, 'twas rage, 'twas noise,  
An airy scene of transitory joys'<sup>2</sup>

His temper was not naturally smooth, but seldom boiled over<sup>3</sup>. It was worth while to find out the *mollia tempora fandi*<sup>4</sup>. The words *nugarum contemptor* fell often from him, in a reverie. When asked about them, he said, he appropriated them from a preface of Dr. Hody. He was desirous of seeing every thing that was extraordinary in art or nature<sup>5</sup>; and to resemble his Imlac<sup>6</sup> in his moral romance of *Rasselas*. It was the fault of fortune that he did not animadvert on every thing at home and abroad<sup>7</sup>. He had been upon the salt-water, and observed something of a sea-life: of the uniformity of the scene, and of the sickness and turbulence belonging to that element, he had felt enough<sup>8</sup>. He had seen a little of the military life and

<sup>1</sup> 'In his diet he was abstemious; not delicate in the choice of his dishes; and strong liquors of all kinds were his aversion,' &c. Milton's *Poems*, ed. Elijah Fenton, 1725. Preface, p. 26.

'What neat repast shall feast us,  
light and choice,  
Of Attic taste with wine.'

Milton's *Sonnets*.

'What more foul common sin among us than drunkenness? And who can be ignorant that if the importation of wine and the use of all strong drink were forbid, it would both clean rid the possibility of committing that odious vice, and men might afterwards live happily and healthfully without the use of those intoxicating liquors.' Milton's *Tetrachordon*, *Works*, 1806, ii. 163.

<sup>2</sup> *Solomon on the Vanity of the World*, Bk. ii. l. 106.

<sup>3</sup> 'He was hard to please and easily offended; impetuous and irritable in his temper, but of a most

humane and benevolent heart.' *Life*, iv. 426.

<sup>4</sup> 'mollissima fandi  
Tempora.'

*Aeneid*, iv. 293.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell, recording his visit with Johnson to a silk-mill at Derby, says:—'I had learnt from Dr. Johnson, during this interview, not to think with a dejected indifference of the works of art, and the pleasures of life, because life is uncertain and short; but to consider such indifference as a failure of reason, a morbidness of mind.' *Life*, iii. 164.

<sup>6</sup> Boswell compares him to Imlac. *Ib.* iii. 6. See also *ante*, ii. 220.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, iii. 449.

<sup>8</sup> At Plymouth in 1762, and among the Hebrides in 1773. *Ib.* i. 377; v. 280-4, 308. He had also crossed the Straits of Dover. *Ib.* ii. 384. It was 'a state of life of which Dr. Johnson always expressed the greatest abhorrence.' *Ib.* i. 348; ii. 438; iii. 266; v. 137; *ante*, i. 335.

discipline

discipline, by having passed whole days and nights in the camp, and in the tents, at Warley Common<sup>1</sup>. He was able to make himself entertaining in his description of what he had seen. A spark was enough to illuminate him. The Giant and the Corsican Fairy were objects of attention to him. The riding-horses in Astley's amphitheatre<sup>2</sup> (no new public amusement, for Homer alludes to it) he went to see; and on the fireworks of Torée he wrote a Latin poem<sup>3</sup>.

The study of humanity, as was injuriously said of the great Bentley, had not made him inhuman<sup>4</sup>. He never wantonly brandished his formidable weapon<sup>5</sup>. He meant to keep his enemies off. He did not mean, as in the advice of Radcliffe to Mead, to 'bully the world, lest the world should bully him'<sup>6</sup>. He seemed to be a man of great clemency to all subordinate beings.

<sup>1</sup> Where a camp was formed in 1778 during the dread of a French and Spanish invasion. *Life*, iii. 360.

<sup>2</sup> 'Of Whitefield he said, "Whitefield never drew as much attention as a mountebank does; he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was strange. Were Astley to preach a sermon standing upon his head on a horse's back, he would collect a multitude to hear him; but no wise man would say he had made a better sermon for that."' *Ib.* iii. 409.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 321. This poem is not included in Johnson's *Works*.

<sup>4</sup> 'Bentley having spoken thus, Scaliger bestowing him a sour look:—"Miscreant prater," said he, "...thy learning makes thee more barbarous, thy study of humanity more inhuman."' *The Battle of the Books*. Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, iii. 230. There is a play on words here, for *humanity* in one of its senses meant 'philology; grammatical studies.'

<sup>5</sup> 'I was (wrote Mickel) upwards of twelve years acquainted with Dr. Johnson, was frequently in his com-

pany, always talked with ease to him, and can truly say, that I never received from him one rough word.' *Life*, iv. 250.

<sup>6</sup> 'An eminent critic,' no doubt Malone, said:—"I have been often in his company, and never *once* heard him say a severe thing to any one. When he did say a severe thing, it was generally extorted by ignorance pretending to knowledge, or by extreme vanity or affectation." *Ib.* iv. 341. 'He never attacked the unassuming, nor meant to terrify the diffident.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 343.

<sup>6</sup> 'Dr. Radcliffe told Dr. Mead, "Mead, I love you, and now I will tell you a sure secret to make your fortune; use all mankind ill." As for this maxim he was right. The generality are bullies, and if you do not bully them, they will bully you. Yet nobody ever practised this rule less than Dr. Mead, who, as I have been informed by great physicians, got as much again by his practice as Dr. Radcliffe did.' J. Richardson's *Richardsoniana*, quoted in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1776, p. 373.

He

He said, 'he would not sit at table, where a lobster that had been roasted alive was one of the dishes'.<sup>1</sup> His charities were many; only not so extensive as his pity, for that was universal. An evening club, for three nights in every week, was contrived to amuse him, in Essex Street, founded, according to his own words, 'in frequency and parsimony';<sup>2</sup> to which he gave a set of rules, as Ben Jonson did his *leges convivales* at the Devil Tavern<sup>3</sup>—Johnson asked one of his executors, a few days before his death (which, according to his will, he expected every day<sup>4</sup>) 'where do you intend to bury me?' He answered, 'in Westminster-abbey.' 'Then,' continued he, 'place a stone over my grave (probably to notify the spot) that my remains may not be disturbed'.<sup>5</sup> Who will come forth with an inscription for him in the Poets' corner?<sup>6</sup> Who should have thought that Garrick and Johnson would have their last sleep together?<sup>7</sup> It were to be wished he could have written his own epitaph with propriety. None of the lapidary inscriptions by Dr. Freind<sup>8</sup> have more merit

<sup>1</sup> For his kindness to his cat Hodge see *Life*, iv. 197, and for the advice he gave to Boswell about old horses unfit for work, *ib.* iv. 250.

<sup>2</sup> 'We meet thrice a week, and he who misses forfeits two-pence.' *ib.* iv. 254. In the Rules the forfeit is three-pence.

<sup>3</sup> Ben Jonson wrote *Leges Convivales* that were 'engraven in marble over the chimney in the Apollo of the Old Devil Tavern, Temple Bar; that being his Club Room.' Jonson's *Works*, ed. 1756, vii. 291.

<sup>4</sup> 'I, SAMUEL JOHNSON, being in full possession of my faculties, but fearing this night may put an end to my life, do ordain this my last Will and Testament.' *Life*, iv. 402.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, ii. 133; *Life*, iv. 419. For his care that his parents' grave should be protected by 'a stone deep, massy, and hard' see *ib.* iv. 393.

<sup>6</sup> His monument with an inscription by Parr was placed in St. Paul's. *ib.* iv. 423.

<sup>7</sup> 'Within a few feet of Johnson lies (by one of those singular coincidences in which the Abbey abounds) his deadly enemy, James Macpherson.' Stanley's *Westminster Abbey*, p. 298.

<sup>8</sup> Warburton in a note on 'Sepulchral Lies, our holy walls to grace,'

(*Dunciad*, i. 43), says:—'This is a just satire on the flatteries and falsehoods admitted to be inscribed on the walls of churches in epitaphs; which occasioned the following epigram:—

"Freind! in your epitaphs I'm griev'd

So very much is said:

One half will never be believ'd,

The other never read."

'The epigram here inserted (adds Warton) alludes to the too long, and sometimes fulsome epitaphs written by Dr. Freind in pure Latinity, indeed, but full of antitheses.' Warton's *Pope's Works*, ed. 1822, v. 84.

than

than what Johnson wrote on Thrale<sup>1</sup>, on Goldsmith<sup>2</sup>, and Mrs. Salusbury<sup>3</sup>. By the way, one of these was criticised, by some men of learning and taste, from the table of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and conveyed to him in a round robin<sup>4</sup>. Maty, in his Review<sup>5</sup>, praises his Latin epitaphs very highly. This son of study and of indigence died worth above seventeen hundred pounds<sup>6</sup>: Milton died worth fifteen hundred<sup>7</sup>. His legacy to his black servant, Frank, is noble and exemplary<sup>8</sup>. Milton left in his hand-writing the titles of some future subjects for his pen<sup>9</sup>: so did Johnson<sup>10</sup>.

Johnson died *by a quiet and silent expiration*, to use his own words on Milton: and his funeral was splendidly and numerously attended<sup>11</sup>. The friends of the Doctor were happy on his easy departure, for they apprehended he might have died hard. At the end of this sketch, it may be hinted (sooner might have been prepossession) that Johnson told this writer, for he saw he always had his eye and his ear upon him, that at some time or other he might be called upon to assist a posthumous account of him<sup>12</sup>.

A hint was given to our author, a few years ago, by this Rhapsodist, to write his own life, lest somebody should write it for him. He has reason to believe, he has left a manuscript biography behind him<sup>13</sup>. His executors, all honourable men, will

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 238; *Life*, iv. 85, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 236; *Life*, ii. 263.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iii. 83. *Round robin* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

<sup>5</sup> *The New Review* by Henry Maty, April, 1784. *Ante*, i. 237.

<sup>6</sup> He left more than £2,000. The bequest to Frank Barber Hawkins estimated at a sum little short of £1,500. The proceeds of his house at Lichfield, which sold for £235, were divided among his relations. He left besides in legacies £300 in money, and £500 in the three per cents., worth about £280.

<sup>7</sup> Johnson's *Works*, vii. 114.

<sup>8</sup> *Ante*, ii. 126.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson's *Works*, vii. 90.

<sup>10</sup> *Life*, iv. 381, n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> These words also are taken from Johnson's account of Milton. *Works*, vii. 112. Johnson's funeral however was not 'splendidly' attended in the ordinary use of the word—not as Garrick's was, or Reynolds's, or Burke's. There was not a single nobleman present. *Life*, iv. 419; *Letters*, ii. 434; *ante*, ii. 136.

<sup>12</sup> *Life*, i. 26, n. 1; *ante*, i. 165.

<sup>13</sup> Boswell, speaking of the papers which Johnson burnt a few days before his death, says:—'Two very valuable articles, I am sure, we have lost, which were two quarto volumes, containing a full, fair, and most par-



sit in judgment upon his papers<sup>1</sup>. Thuanus, Buchanan, Huetius, and others, have been their own historians.

The memory of some people, says Mably<sup>2</sup> very lately, 'is their understanding<sup>3</sup>.' This may be thought, by some readers, to be the case in point. Whatever anecdotes were furnished by memory, this pen did not choose to part with to any compiler. His little bit of gold he has worked into as much gold-leaf as he could.

T. T.

[The following anecdote, with some others, was given by Tyers in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 85. The rest, so far as they were of any value, I have incorporated in my notes.]

Dr. Johnson had a large, but not a splendid library<sup>4</sup>, near 5,000 volumes. Many authors, not in hostility with him, presented him with their works. But his study did not contain half his books. He possessed the chair that belonged to the

ticular account of his own life, from his earliest recollection.' *Life*, iv. 405. One of these volumes Hawkins carried off, but was forced to bring back. *Ante*, i. 127; ii. 129.

<sup>1</sup> His executors were Hawkins, Reynolds, and William Scott (Lord Stowell). *Life*, iv. 402, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Prescott wrote in 1841:—'Have read for the tenth time *Mably sur l'Étude de l'Histoire*, full of admirable reflections and hints. Pity that his love of the ancients made him high gravel-blind to the merits of the moderns.' Ticknor's *Life of Prescott*, Boston, 1864, p. 91, n. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Tyers probably did not know that he had been 'described by Johnson in *The Idler*, No. 48, under the name of Tom Restless; "a circumstance," says Mr. Nichols, "pointed out to me by Dr. Johnson himself.'" *Lit. Anec.* viii. 81. 'When Tom Restless rises he goes into a coffee-house, where he creeps so near to men whom he takes to be

reasoners, as to hear their discourse, and endeavours to remember something which, when it has been strained through Tom's head, is so near to nothing, that what it once was cannot be discovered. This he carries round from friend to friend through a circle of visits, till, hearing what each says upon the question, he becomes able at dinner to say a little himself; and as every great genius relaxes himself among his inferiors, meets with some who wonder how so young a man can talk so wisely.'

<sup>4</sup> 'His library, though by no means handsome in its appearance, was sold by Mr. Christie for £247 9s. *Life*, iv. 402, n. 2. See also *ib.* i. 188, n. 3, 435.

My friend, Mr. Edward J. Leveson, the Scribe of the Johnson Club, reprinted a facsimile of the sale catalogue of Dr. Johnson's Library for the meeting of the Johnson Club at Oxford, June 11, 1892.

Ciceronian

Ciceronian Dr. King of Oxford, which was given him by his friend Vansittart<sup>1</sup>. It answers the purposes of reading and writing, by night or by day; and is as valuable in all respects as the chair of Ariosto, as delineated in the preface to Hoole's liberal translation of that poet. Since the rounding of this period intelligence is brought that this literary chair is purchased by Mr. Hoole. Relicks are venerable things, and are only not to be worshipped. On the reading-chair of Mr. Speaker Onslow a part of this historical sketch was written<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson wrote from Oxford in 1759:—'I have proposed to Vansittart climbing over the wall; but he has refused me. And I have clapped my hands till they are sore at Dr. King's speech.' *Life*, i.

348. For Dr. King see *ib.* i. 279, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Speaker Onslow's copy of Johnson's *Dictionary* is the one I have used in writing my notes on Boswell and Johnson.

*NARRATIVE*  
*OF THE LAST WEEK OF JOHNSON'S LIFE*  
*BY THE*  
*RIGHT HON. WILLIAM WINDHAM*

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[FROM the *Diary of the Right Hon. William Windham*, 1 vol. 8vo. 1866, p. 28.

For other extracts from this Diary see *Letters*, ii. 439.]

TUESDAY, December 7th. Ten minutes past two, P.M.

After waiting some short time in the adjoining room, I was admitted to Dr. Johnson<sup>1</sup> in his bedchamber, where, after placing me next him on the chair, he sitting in his usual place on the east side of the room (and I on his right hand), he put into my hands two small volumes (an edition of the New Testament), as he afterwards told me, saying, '*Extremum hoc munus morientis habeto.*' He then proceeded to observe that I was entering upon a life which would lead me deeply into all the business of the world<sup>2</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 407, 411, 415.

<sup>2</sup> In the Coalition Ministry of 1783 Windham had been Chief Secretary for Ireland. *Ib.* iv. 200.

'Windham was a man of a very high order, spoiled by faults apparently small. For the sake of a new subtlety or a forcible phrase he was content to utter what loaded him with permanent unpopularity; his logical propensity led him always

to extreme consequences.' Mackintosh's *Life*, ii. 59. He eagerly opposed the establishment of parochial schools, the abolition of the slave trade, and the bills for preventing wanton cruelty to animals, and for the abolition of capital punishment for petty thefts. Romilly's *Life*, ii. 216, 288. 'I remember with delight,' wrote Parr, 'those happier days when his refinements, instead of being that

that he did not condemn civil employment, but that it was a state of great danger ; and that he had therefore one piece of advice earnestly to impress upon me—that I would set apart every seventh day for the care of my soul ; that one day, the seventh, should be employed in repenting what was amiss in the six preceding, and fortifying my virtue for the six to come ; that such a portion of time was surely little enough for the meditation of eternity. He then told me that he had a request to make to me ; namely, that I would allow his servant Frank to look up to me as his friend, adviser, and protector, in all difficulties which his own weakness and imprudence, or the force or fraud of others, might bring him into. He said that he had left him what he considered an ample provision, viz. 70*l.* per annum<sup>1</sup> ; but that even that sum might not place him above the want of a protector, and to me, therefore, he recommended him as to one who had will, and power, and activity to protect him. Having obtained my assent to this, he proposed that Frank should be called in ; and desiring me to take him by the hand in token of the promise, repeated before him the recommendation he had just made of him, and the promise I had given to attend to it. I then took occasion to say how much I felt—what I had long foreseen that I should feel, regret at having spent so little of my life in his company<sup>2</sup>. I stated this as an instance where resolutions are deferred till the occasions are past. For some time past I had determined that such an occasion of self-reproach should not subsist, and had built upon the hope of passing in his society the chief part of my time, at the moment when it was to be apprehended we were about to lose him for ever. I had no difficulty in speaking to him thus of my apprehensions ; I could not help, on the other hand, entertaining hopes ; but with these I did not like to trouble him, lest he should conceive that I thought it necessary to flatter him. He answered hastily, that he was sure

dangerous in practice, were in theory only amusing.' *Field's Life of Parr*, i. 319.

<sup>1</sup> His will is dated Dec. 8, the day after he spoke to Windham ; but he had made 'a temporary one' eleven

days earlier. *Ante*, ii. 126, 132.

<sup>2</sup> Windham, who had lately paid him a short visit at Ashbourne, recorded the day he left, 'Regretted, upon reflection, that I had not staid another day.' *Letters*, ii. 441.

I would

I would not; and proceeded to make a compliment to the manliness of my mind, which, whether deserved or not, ought to be remembered, that it may be deserved.

I then stated, that among other neglects was the omission of introducing, of all others, the most important [subjects], the consequence of which particularly filled my mind at that moment, and on which I had often been desirous to know his opinions. The subjects I meant were, I said, 'natural and revealed religion.' The wish thus generally stated, was in part gratified on the instant. For revealed religion, he said, there was such historical evidence, as, upon any subject not religious, would have left no doubt. Had the facts recorded in the New Testament been mere civil occurrences, no one would have called in question the testimony by which they are established; but the importance annexed to them, amounting to nothing less than the salvation of mankind, *raised a cloud* in our minds, and created doubts unknown upon any other subject. Of proofs to be derived from history, one of the most cogent, he seemed to think, was the opinion so well authenticated, and so long entertained, of a Deliverer that was to appear about that time. Among the typical representations, the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, in which no bone was to be broken, had early struck his mind. For the immediate life and miracles of Christ, such attestation as that of the apostles, who all, except St. John, confirmed their testimony with their blood; such belief as their witness procured from a people best furnished with the means of judging, and least disposed to judge favourably; such an extension afterwards of that belief over all the nations of the earth, though originating from a nation of all others most despised, would leave no doubt that the things witnessed were true, and were of a nature more than human. With respect to evidence, Dr. Johnson observed that we had not such evidence that Caesar died in the Capitol, as that Christ died in the manner related<sup>1</sup>.

11th. First day of skating; ice fine. Find I have lost nothing since last year.

Between nine and ten went to Sir Joshua, whom I took up by

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 428, 444, 454; v. 340; *ante*, ii. 157.

the way, to see Dr. Johnson. Strachan<sup>1</sup> and Langton there. No hopes; though a great discharge had taken place from the legs.

12th. Came down about ten; read reviews, wrote to Mrs. Siddons, and then went to the ice; came home only in time to dress and go to my mother's to dinner. About half past seven went to Dr. Johnson's, where I stayed, chiefly in the outer room, till past eleven. Strachan there during the whole time; during part Mr. Hoole; and latterly Mr. Cruikshank and the apothecary. I only went in twice, for a few minutes each time: the first time I hinted only what they had before been urging; namely, that he would be prevailed upon to take some sustenance, and desisted upon his exclaiming. 'Tis all very childish; let us hear no more of it.' The second time I came in, in consequence of a consultation with Mr. Cruikshank and the apothecary, and addressed him formally. After premising that I considered what I was going to say as a matter of duty; I said that I hoped he would not suspect me of the weakness of importuning him to take nourishment for the purpose of prolonging his life for a few hours or days. I then stated what the reason was, that it was to secure that which I was persuaded he was most anxious about; namely, that he might preserve his faculties entire to the last moment. Before I had quite stated my meaning, he interrupted me by saying, that he had refused no sustenance but inebriating sustenance; and proceeded to give instances where, in compliance with the wishes of his physician, he had taken even a small quantity of wine. I readily assented to any objections he might have to nourishment of that kind, and observing that milk was the only nourishment I intended, flattered myself that I had succeeded in my endeavours, when he recurred to his general refusal, and 'begged that there might be an end of it.' I then said, that I hoped he would forgive my earnestness—or something to that effect, when he replied eagerly, that from me nothing would be necessary by way of apology; adding, with great fervour, in words which I shall (I hope) never forget, 'God bless you, my dear Windham, through Jesus Christ;' and concluding with a wish 'that we might [share] in some humble portion of that happiness which God might finally vouchsafe to

<sup>1</sup> Rev. George Strahan.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 159.

repentant sinners.' These were the last words I ever heard him speak. I hurried out of the room with tears in my eyes, and more affected than I had been on any former occasion.

December 13.—In the morning meant to have met Mr. Cruikshank in Bolt Court; but while I was deliberating about going, was sent for by Mr. Burke. Went to Bolt Court about half-past three. Found Dr. Johnson had been almost constantly asleep since nine in the morning, and heard from Mr. Des Moulins an account of what had passed in the night. He had compelled Frank to give him a lancet, and had besides concealed in the bed a pair of scissors, and with one or the other of these had scarified himself in three places, two in the leg, &c. On Mr. Des Moulins making a difficulty of giving him the lancet, he said, 'Don't you, if you have any scruples; but I will compel Frank:' and on Mr. Des Moulins attempting afterwards to prevent Frank from giving it to him, and at last to restrain his hands, he grew very outrageous, so as to call Frank scoundrel, and to threaten Mr. Des Moulins that he would stab him. He then made the three incisions above mentioned, of which one in the leg, &c. were not unskilfully made; but the other in the leg was a deep and ugly wound from which, with the others, they suppose him to have lost nearly eight ounces of blood<sup>1</sup>. Upon Dr. Heberden expressing his fears about the scarification, Dr. Johnson told him he was *timidorum timidissimus*<sup>2</sup>.

A few days before his death, talking with Dr. Brocklesby, he said, 'Now will you ascribe my death to my having taken eight grains of squills, when you recommended only three; Dr. Heberden, to my having opened my left foot, when nature was pointing out the discharge in the right<sup>3</sup>.' The conversation was introduced by his quoting some lines to the same purpose, from Swift's verses on his own death<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* i. 199.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* ii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> 'The doctors, tender of their fame,  
Wisely on me lay all the blame.

"We must confess his case was nice;  
But he would never take advice.

Had he been rul'd, for aught appears,

He might have liv'd these twenty  
years;

For, when we open'd him, we found  
That all his vital parts were sound."

*On the Death of Dr. Swift.* Swift's  
*Works*, ed. 1803, xi. 245.

Johnson in his last years often

It

It was within the same period (if I understood Dr. Brocklesby rightly) that he enjoined him, as an honest man and a physician, to inform him how long he thought he had to live. Dr. Brocklesby inquired, in return, whether he had firmness to learn the answer. Upon his replying that he had, and Dr. B. limiting the term to a few weeks, he said, 'that he then would trouble himself no more with medicine or medical advice:' and to this resolution he pretty much adhered<sup>1</sup>.

In a conversation about what was practicable in medicine or surgery, he quoted, to the surprise of his physicians, the opinion of Marchetti for an operation (I think) of extracting part of the kidney. He recommended for an account of China, Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*. Halliday's *Notes on Juvenal* he thought so highly of as to have employed himself for some time in translating them into Latin<sup>2</sup>.

He insisted on the doctrine of an expiatory sacrifice as the condition without which there was no Christianity; and urged in support the belief entertained in all ages, and by all nations, barbarous as well as polite. He recommended to Dr. Brocklesby, also, Clarke's Sermons, and repeated to him the passage which he had spoken of to me<sup>3</sup>.

While airing one day with Dr. B., in passing and returning by St. Pancras' church, he fell into prayer, and mentioned, upon Dr. B.'s inquiring why the Catholics chose that for their burying place, that some Catholics, in Queen Elizabeth's time, had been burnt there<sup>4</sup>. Upon Dr. B.'s asking him whether he did not feel the warmth of the sun, he quoted from Juvenal—

quoted from this poem. *Letters*, ii. 147, 192, 302, 404, 421.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 415; *ante*, ii. 122, 149, 369.

<sup>2</sup> Barten Holyday, or Holiday, published in 1616 a verse translation of Persius. 'The posthumous edition of 1673 was accompanied by a new translation of Juvenal, and contains voluminous notes.' *Dict. Nat. Biog.* xxvii. 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 205; *Life*, iv. 414, 416; v. 88.

<sup>4</sup> 'Pancras, a small hamlet in Middlesex, on the north-west side of London, in the road to Kentish town. The churchyard is a general burying-place for persons of the Romish religion.' Dodsley's *London*, ed. 1761, v. 105. General Paoli was buried there. No Catholics were burnt by Elizabeth. 'There was nothing in the creeds of the Puritans or of the Catholics which, according to law, could subject them to the pains of heresy; but the Anabaptists

'Præterea



'Præterea minimus gelido jam in corpore sanguis  
Febre calet solâ':

45 minutes past 10 P.M.—While I was writing the adjoining articles I received the fatal account, so long dreaded, that Dr. Johnson was no more!

May those prayers which he incessantly poured from a heart fraught with the deepest devotion, find that acceptance with Him to whom they were addressed, which piety, so humble and so fervent, may seem to promise!

Dr. Brocklesby made him an offer of 100*l.* a year if he should determine to go abroad; he pressed his hands and said, 'God bless you through Jesus Christ, but I will take no money but from my sovereign'.<sup>2</sup> This, if I mistake not, was told the King through West<sup>3</sup>. That Johnson wanted much assistance, and that the Chancellor meant to apply for it, His Majesty was told through the same channel.

On dissection of the body, vesicles of wind were found on the lungs (which Dr. Heberden said he had never seen, and of which Cruikshank professed to have seen only two instances), one of the kidneys quite gone, a gall stone in the bladder, I think; no water in the chest, and little in the abdomen, no more than might have found its way thither after death.

20th.—A memorable day—the day which saw deposited in Westminster Abbey the remains of Johnson. After our return from the Abbey I spent some time with Burke on the subject of his negociation with the Chancellor. We dined at Sir Joshua Reynolds', viz. Burke and R. Burke, Metcalf, Colman, Hoole, Scott, Burney and Brocklesby.

were still doomed to suffer at the stake under Elizabeth.' Lingard's *Hist. of England*, ed. 1823, viii. 183. Three Anabaptists were burnt, and one, Francis Kett, 'who had uttered blasphemies against the Divinity of Christ.'

<sup>1</sup> *Satires*, x. 217:—

'Add that a fever only warms  
his veins,  
And thaws the little blood that  
yet remains.' GIFFORD.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 338; *ante*, i. 441-3; ii. 369.

<sup>3</sup> Most likely Benjamin West, the painter.

# MINOR ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON

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BY ROBERT BARCLAY.

[FROM Croker's *Boswell*, x. 122. For Robert Barclay, who with John Perkins bought Thrale's Brewery, see *Life*, iv. 118, n. 1; *Letters*, ii. 216 n.

He was the great-grandson of the author of the *Apology*. He must not be confused with his cousin and contemporary Robert Barclay, the banker of Lombard Street.]

Mr. Barclay, from his connexion with Mr. Thrale, had several opportunities of meeting and conversing with Dr. Johnson. On his becoming a partner in the brewery, Johnson advised him not to allow his commercial pursuits to divert his attention from his studies. 'A mere literary man,' said the Doctor, 'is a *dull* man; a man who is solely a man of business is a *selfish* man; but when literature and commerce are united, they make a *respectable* man<sup>1</sup>.'

Mr. Barclay had never observed any rudeness or violence on the part of Johnson. He has seen Boswell lay down his knife and fork, and take out his tablets, in order to register a good anecdote<sup>2</sup>. When Johnson proceeded to the dining-room, one of Mr. Thrale's servants handed him a wig of a smarter description than the one he wore in the morning; the exchange

<sup>1</sup> 'Domi inter mille mercaturae negotia literarum elegantiam minime neglexit.' Johnson's epitaph on Mr.

Thrale. *Ante*, i. 238; ii. 13, 309. For *respectable* see *Life*, iii. 241, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 175.

took

took place in the hall, or passage<sup>1</sup>. Johnson, like many other men, was always in much better humour *after* dinner than *before*.

Mr. Barclay saw Johnson ten days before he died, when the latter observed, 'That they should never meet more. Have you any objection to receive an old man's blessing?' Mr. Barclay knelt down, and Johnson gave him his blessing with great fervency.

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BY H. D. BEST.

[From *Personal and Literary Memorials*, 1 vol., 8vo. London, 1829, pp. 11, 62, 63, 65.]

Mrs. Digby told me that when she lived in London with her sister Mrs. Brooke<sup>2</sup>, they were every now and then honoured by the visits of Dr. Johnson. He called on them one day soon after the publication of his immortal dictionary. The two ladies paid him due compliments on the occasion. Amongst other topics of praise they very much commended the omission of all *naughty* words. 'What, my dears! then you have been looking for them?' said the moralist. The ladies, confused at being thus caught, dropped the subject of the dictionary.

In early youth I knew Bennet Langton, *of that ilk*, as the Scotch say. With great personal claims to the respect of the public, he is known to that public chiefly as a friend of Johnson. He was a very tall, meagre, long-visaged man, much resembling, according to Richard Paget, a stork standing on one leg, near the shore, in Raphael's cartoon of the miraculous draught of fishes. His manners were in the highest degree polished; his conversation mild, equable, and always pleasing. He had the uncommon faculty of being a good reader<sup>3</sup>. I formed an

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 322; ii. 192.

<sup>3</sup> He read Dodsley's *Cleone* to Johnson, who 'at the end of an act said, "Come, let's have some

more, let's go into the slaughter-house again, Lanky. But I am afraid there is more blood than brains.'" *Life*, iv. 20.

intimacy

intimacy with his son, and went to pay him a visit at Langton. After breakfast we walked to the top of a very steep hill behind the house. When we arrived at the summit, Mr. Langton said, 'Poor, dear Dr. Johnson, when he came to this spot, turned to look down the hill, and said he was determined "to take a roll down".' When we understood what he meant to do, we endeavoured to dissuade him; but he was resolute, saying, he had not had a roll for a long time; and taking out of his lesser pockets whatever might be in them—keys, pencil, purse, or pen-knife, and laying himself parallel with the edge of the hill, he actually descended, turning himself over and over till he came to the bottom.'

The story was told with such gravity, and with an air of such affectionate remembrance of a departed friend, that it was impossible to suppose this extraordinary freak of the great lexicographer to have been a fiction or invention of Mr. Langton.

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BY SIR BROOKE BOOTHBY.

[The following anecdotes were communicated to Dr. Anderson by Sir Brooke Boothby, Bart., 'who had frequent opportunities of enjoying the company of Johnson at Lichfield and Ashbourne.' Anderson's *Life of Johnson*, ed. 1815, p. 322.

Sir Brooke Boothby was the brother of Miss Hill Boothby. *Ante*, i. 18; *Life*, i. 83; *Letters*, i. 45.]

Johnson spoke as he wrote. He would take up a topic, and utter upon it a number of the *Rambler*<sup>1</sup>. On a question, one day, at Miss Porter's, concerning the authority of a newspaper for some fact, he related, that a lady of his acquaintance implicitly believed every thing she read in the papers; and that, by way of curing her credulity, he fabricated a story of a battle between the Russians and Turks, then at war; and 'that it

<sup>1</sup> Johnson visited Langton in 1764. *Life*, i. 476; *ante*, i. 286, 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 348; ii. 92.

'M. de Buffon remarque très-bien

que ceux qui écrivent comme ils parlent, quoiqu'ils parlent très-bien, écrivent mal.' *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. 1814, i. 33.

might,' he said, 'bear internal evidence of its futility, I laid the scene in an island at the conflux of the Boristhenes and the Danube; rivers which run at the distance of a hundred leagues from each other. The lady, however, believed the story, and never forgave the deception; the consequence of which was, that I lost an agreeable companion, and she was deprived of an innocent amusement'. And he added, as an extraordinary circumstance, that the Russian ambassador sent in great haste to the printer, to know from whence he had received the intelligence. Another time, at Dr. Taylor's, a few days after the death of the wife of the Rev. Mr. Kennedy, of Bradley<sup>2</sup>, a woman of extraordinary sense, he described the eccentricities of the man and the woman, with a nicety of discrimination, and a force of language, equal to the best of his periodical essays. Now, with such powers, and the full confidence he felt in himself before any audience, he must have made an able and impressive speaker in Parliament<sup>3</sup>.

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BY THE REV. W. COLE.

[From Cole's Collection in the British Museum. Croker's *Boswell*, x. 123.]

I was told by Mr. Farmer, the present Master of Emanuel College<sup>4</sup>, that he being in London last year [1774] with Mr. Arnold, tutor in St. John's College, was desired to introduce

<sup>1</sup> The lady was Mrs. Salusbury, Mrs. Thrale's mother. She was reconciled to Johnson. *Ante*, i. 235.

<sup>2</sup> A village in Derbyshire, where Johnson visited the Meynells. *Life*, i. 82; *Letters*, i. 45, n. 6. 'In 1762 he wrote for the Rev. Dr. John Kennedy, the Rector of Bradley, in a strain of very courtly elegance a dedication to the King.' *Life*, i. 366. It is probably the same Dr. Kennedy who wrote a foolish tragedy which had been shown to Mr. Fitzherbert, and who married Miss Meynell. *Ib.* iii. 238.

The following anecdote is recorded of one branch of the Meynells in Hutton's *History of Derby*, ed. 1867, p. 267. 'While the Meynell family were spending their sober evening by the glow of their own fire, a coach and six was heard rolling up to the door. "Bring candles," says the lady of the mansion, with some emotion, while she stepped forward to receive the guests; but instantly returning, "Light up a rush," said she, "it is only my cousin Curzon."'

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 362 n.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iii. 38.

the latter, who had been bred a Whig, to the acquaintance of the very learned and sensible Dr. Samuel Johnson. They had not been long together, before (the conversation leading to it) the Doctor, addressing himself to Mr. Arnold, said, 'Sir, you are a young man, but I have seen a great deal of the world, and take it upon my word and experience, that where you see a Whig you see a rascal<sup>1</sup>.' Mr. Farmer said he was startled, and rather uneasy that the Doctor had expressed himself so bluntly, and was apprehensive that Mr. Arnold might be shocked and take it ill. But they laughed it off, and were very good company.

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FROM WILLIAM COOKE'S LIFE OF  
SAMUEL FOOTE.

Dr. Johnson being asked by a lady why he so constantly gave money to beggars, replied with great feeling, 'Madam, to enable them to beg on<sup>2</sup>.' Vol. ii. p. 110.

Dr. Johnson being asked by a lady what love was, replied, 'It was the wisdom of a fool and the folly of the wise.' Vol. ii. p. 154.

In the recital of prayers and religious poems Dr. Johnson was awfully impressive<sup>3</sup>. One night at the Club<sup>4</sup>, a person quoting the nineteenth psalm, the Doctor caught fire; and instantly taking off his hat began with great solemnity:—

'The spacious firmament on high,'

and went through that beautiful hymn<sup>5</sup>. Those who were

<sup>1</sup> For *rascal* see *ib.* iii. 1, and for abuse of Whigs and Whiggism, vi. 323. The autumn of this same year (1774), just before the general election, Johnson said to Burke, 'I wish you all the success which ought to be wished you, which can possibly be wished you indeed—*by an honest man.*' *Ante*, i. 309.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 204.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* ii. 266.

<sup>4</sup> Most likely the Essex Head Club, of which Cooke was a member.

<sup>5</sup> Thackeray in his *English Humourists* (ed. 1858, p. 109) says of this hymn of Addison's:—'Listen to him; from your childhood you have known the verses: but who can hear their sacred music without love and awe? . . . It seems to me that these verses shine like the stars. They shine out of a great deep calm.'

acquainted

acquainted with the Doctor knew how harsh his features in general were; but, upon this occasion, to use the language of Scripture,—‘his face was almost as if it had been the face of an angel’.

Soon after Garrick’s purchase at Hampton Court<sup>2</sup> he was showing Dr. Johnson the grounds, the house, Shakespeare’s temple &c.; and concluded by asking him, ‘Well, Doctor, how do you like all this?’ ‘Why, it is pleasant enough,’ growled the Doctor, ‘for the present; but all these things, David, make death very terrible.’

At the same time on Garrick’s showing him a magnificent library, full of books in most elegant bindings, the Doctor began running over the volumes in his usual coarse and negligent manner; which was by opening the book so wide as almost to break the back of it, and then flung them down one by one on the floor with contempt<sup>3</sup>. ‘Zounds!’ said Garrick, who was in torture all this time, ‘why, what are you about there? you’ll spoil all my books.’ ‘No, Sir,’ cried Johnson, ‘I have done nothing but treat a pack of *silly plays* in *fops’ dresses* just as they deserve; but I *see no books*.’

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#### FROM THE *EUROPEAN MAGAZINE* <sup>4</sup>.

Boswell was a man of excellent natural parts, on which he had engrafted a great deal of general knowledge<sup>5</sup>. His talents as a man of company were much heightened by his extreme

<sup>1</sup> *Acts*, vi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Here he received the visits of the nobility, of the ablest scholars, and the men of genius in every branch of literature. He lived in an elegant style, and to the luxuries of the table added his wit and the polished manner of one who had enjoyed the best company. His behaviour was modest and unassuming; he gave himself no superior airs, and the pride which a large fortune often

inspires was foreign to his heart.’  
Murphy’s *Life of Garrick*, p. 345.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 192.

<sup>4</sup> *European Magazine*, 1798, p. 376.

<sup>5</sup> When he was twenty-five years old Johnson said to him:—‘Your general mass of knowledge of books and men renders you very capable to make yourself master of any science, or fit yourself for any profession.’  
*Life*, ii. 9.

cheerfulness

cheerfulness and good nature. Mr. Burke said of him, that he had no merit in possessing that agreeable faculty, and that a man might as well assume to himself merit in possessing an excellent constitution<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Boswell professed the Scotch and the English law; but had never taken very great pains on the subject. His father, Lord Auchinleck, told him one day, that it would cost him more trouble to hide his ignorance in these professions, than to show his knowledge. This Mr. Boswell owned he had found to be true<sup>2</sup>. Society was his idol; to that he sacrificed every thing: his eye glistened, and his countenance brightened up, when he saw the human face divine<sup>3</sup>; and that person must have been very fastidious indeed, who did not return him the same compliment when he came into a room. Of his Life of Johnson, who can say too much, or praise it too highly? What is Plutarch's biography to his? so minute, so appropriate, so dramatic<sup>4</sup>.

A gentleman of Lichfield meeting the Doctor returning from a walk, inquired how far he had been? The Doctor replied, he had gone round Mr. Levet's field<sup>5</sup> (the place where the

<sup>1</sup> Johnson wrote to Boswell on July 3, 1778:—'If general approbation will add anything to your enjoyment, I can tell you that I have heard you mentioned as a *man whom everybody likes*.' *Life*, iii. 362. Another time he described him as 'the best travelling companion in the world.' *Ib.* iii. 294. He wrote of him to Mrs. Thrale: 'I shall celebrate his good-humour and perpetual cheerfulness.' *Letters*, i. 291. It was for him that he invented the word *clubable*. 'Boswell (said he) is a very *clubable* man.' *Life*, iv. 254 n.

<sup>2</sup> To his friend Temple he wrote:—'I have a kind of impotency of study.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 181. Nevertheless, in the University which he and Johnson imagined he was 'to teach Civil and Scotch law.' *Life*, v. 108. For his confession of his

ignorance of English law, and of 'the delusion of Westminster Hall, of brilliant reputation and splendid fortune,' which, he continues, 'still weighs upon my imagination,' see *ib.* iii. 179 n.

<sup>3</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Bk. iii. l. 44.

<sup>4</sup> 'Boswell is the first of biographers. He has no second. He has distanced all his competitors so decidedly that it is not worth while to place them. Eclipse is first, and the rest nowhere.' Macaulay's *Essays*, ed. 1843, i. 374.

'Of all the men distinguished in this or any other age Dr. Johnson has left upon posterity the strongest and most vivid impression, so far as person, manners, disposition and conversation are concerned.' Scott's *Works*, ed. 1834, iii. 260.

<sup>5</sup> For John Levett of Lichfield see *Life*, i. 160; *Letters*, i. 14.



scholars play) in search of a rail that he used to jump over when a boy, 'and,' says the Doctor in a transport of joy, 'I have been so fortunate as to find it: I stood, said he, 'gazing upon it some time with a degree of rapture, for it brought to my mind all my juvenile sports and pastimes, and at length I determined to try my skill and dexterity; I laid aside my hat and wig, pulled off my coat, and leapt over it twice.' Thus the great Dr. Johnson, only three years before his death, was, without hat, wig, or coat, jumping over a rail that he had used to fly over when a school-boy<sup>1</sup>.

Amongst those who were so intimate with Dr. Johnson as to have him occasionally an intimate in their families, it is a well known fact that he would frequently descend from the contemplation of subjects the most profound imaginable to the most childish playfulness. It was no uncommon thing to see him hop, step, and jump<sup>2</sup>; he would often seat himself on the back of his chair, and more than once has been known to propose a race on some grassplat adapted to the purpose. He was very intimate and much attached to Mr. John Payne<sup>3</sup>, once a bookseller in Paternoster Row, and afterwards Chief Accountant of the Bank. Mr. Payne was of a very diminutive appearance, and once when they were together on a visit with a friend at some distance from town, Johnson in a gaiety of humour proposed to run a race with Mr. Payne—the proposal was accepted; but, before they had proceeded more than half of the intended distance, Johnson caught his little adversary up in his arms, and without any ceremony placed him upon the arm of a tree which was near, and then continued running as if he had met with a hard match. He afterwards returned with much exultation to release his friend from the no very pleasant situation in which he had left him<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This is, perhaps, an amplification of the story told, *post*, p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> 'I flutter about my room two or three hours in a morning, and when my wings are on can go above an hundred yards at a hop, step and jump.'

Addison, *The Guardian*, No. 112.

In my schoolboy days we always said 'hop, skip and jump.'

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, i. 388.

<sup>4</sup> For his race with a young lady see *ante*, ii. 278.

Doctor, afterwards Dean Maxwell<sup>1</sup>, sitting in company with Johnson, they were talking of the violence of parties, and what unwarrantable and insolent lengths mobs will sometimes run into. 'Why, yes, Sir,' says Johnson, 'they'll do any thing, no matter how odd, or desperate, to gain their point; they'll catch hold of the red-hot end of a poker, sooner than not get possession of it.'

Dr. Johnson, in his tour through North Wales, passed two days at the seat of Colonel Middleton of Gwynagag<sup>2</sup>. While he remained there, the gardener caught a hare amidst some potatoe plants, and brought it to his master, then engaged in conversation with the Doctor. An order was given to carry it to the cook. As soon as Johnson heard this sentence, he begged to have the animal placed in his arms; which was no sooner done, than approaching the window then half open, he restored the hare to her liberty, shouting after her to accelerate her speed. 'What have you done?' cried the Colonel; 'why, Doctor, you have robbed my table of a delicacy, perhaps deprived us of a dinner.' 'So much the better, Sir,' replied the humane champion of a condemned hare; 'for if your table is to be supplied at the expense of the laws of hospitality, I envy not the appetite of him who eats it. This, Sir, is not a hare *feræ naturæ*, but one which had placed itself under your protection; and savage indeed must be that man who does not make his hearth an asylum for the confiding stranger<sup>3</sup>.'

#### BY RICHARD GREEN OF LICHFIELD<sup>4</sup>.

[Richard Green was an apothecary of Lichfield. Of his Museum Johnson said to him:—'Sir, I should as soon have

<sup>1</sup> For Dr. Maxwell's *Collectanea* see *Life*, ii. 116.

<sup>2</sup> 'We came (writes Johnson) to Mr. Myddelton's of Gwynynog, to the first place, as my Mistress observed, where we have been welcome. . . . The table was well supplied, except that the fruit was bad. It was

truly the dinner of a country gentleman. Myddelton is the only man who, in Wales, has talked to me of literature.' *Life*, v. 443, 452. They passed not two days but eight with him.

<sup>3</sup> This story is not in Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes*.

<sup>4</sup> Croker's *Boswell*, ix. 248.

thought

thought of building a man of war as of collecting such a museum.' *Life*, ii. 465. There is a view of it in Shaw's *History of Staffordshire*, p. 332. See also *Letters*, i. 161, n. 5.]

Dr. Brocklesby, a few days before the death of Dr. Johnson, found on the table Dr. Kippis's account of the Disputes of the Royal Society<sup>1</sup>. Dr. Johnson inquired of his physician if he had read it, who answered in the negative. 'You have sustained no loss, Sir. It is poor stuff, indeed, a sad unscholar-like performance. I could not have believed that that man would have written so ill.'

Being desired to call in Dr. Warren<sup>2</sup>, he said they might call

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Andrew Kippis was the editor of a new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*. 'My friend, Dr. Kippis,' wrote Boswell, 'has hitherto discharged the task with more impartiality than might have been expected from a Separatist.' *Life*, iii. 174. In 1784 he published *Observations on the late Contests in the Royal Society*. The contests had been about the Foreign Secretary and the President.

<sup>2</sup> 'When Dr. Warren, in the usual style, hoped that he was better, his answer was, "No, Sir; you cannot conceive with what acceleration I advance towards death."' *Life*, iv. 411. See also *ib.* p. 399; *ante*, ii. 136 n. Warren was a member of the Literary Club. In the debate in the House of Commons on the King's illness on Jan. 6, 1789, Burke, alluding probably to the Club, said:—'He knew Dr. Warren, he belonged to a society where the Doctor frequently came, had always found him an instructive companion, and had ever heard him considered as a man of learning, great integrity and honour.' *Parl. Hist.* xxvii. 919. Miss Burney describes a curious scene one night, where 'the poor Queen in a torrent of tears prepared herself for seeing

Dr. Warren,' after 'he had quitted his post of watching' the King. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, iv. 292. 'He is said to have received in the course of one day fees to the amount of ninety-nine guineas, and to have made £8000 a year ever since the Regency.' *Annual Register*, 1797, ii. 36.

Charles Darwin quotes the following anecdote in his *Life of Erasmus Darwin* (ed. 1887, p. 105):—'A gentleman in the last stage of consumption came to Dr. Darwin at Derby, and expressed himself to this effect:—"I am come from London to consult you as the greatest physician in the world. . . . I know that my life hangs upon a thread. . . . I trust that you will not deceive me, but tell me without hesitation your candid opinion." Dr. Darwin minutely examined him, and said he was sorry to say there was no hope. After a pause of a few minutes the gentleman said, "How long can I live?" The answer was, "Perhaps a fortnight." The gentleman seized his hand and said, "Thank you, Doctor; I thank you; my mind is satisfied; I now know there is no hope for me." Dr. Darwin then said, "But as you come from London, why did you not consult Dr. Warren?"

in

in any body they pleased ; and Warren was called. At his going away, 'You have come in,' said Dr. Johnson, 'at the eleventh hour ; but you shall be paid the same with your fellow-labourers. Francis, put into Dr. Warren's coach a copy of the *English Poets*¹.'

Some years before, some person in a company at Salisbury², of which Dr. Johnson was one, vouched for the company that there was nobody in it afraid of death. 'Speak for yourself, Sir,' said Johnson, 'for indeed I am.' 'I did not say of dying,' replied the other ; 'but of death, meaning its consequences.' 'And so I mean,' rejoined the Doctor ; 'I am very seriously afraid of the consequences³.'

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BY T. GREEN.

[From the *Diary of a Lover of Literature* by T. Green of Ipswich, 4to. 1810; and since continued in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Croker's *Boswell*, x. 141.]

Mr. Monney told me he had often met Johnson, and imitated his manner very happily. Johnson came on a visit to the

"Alas ! Doctor, I am Dr. Warren."  
He died in a week or two afterwards.'

According to the *Annual Register* Warren 'died of spasms in his stomach very unexpectedly, at a moment when Sir G. Baker and Dr. Pitcairn were most sanguine in their hopes of his recovery. His complaint had been a violent erysipelas in his head.' This is confirmed by Lord Charlemont, who wrote on Aug. 19, 1797 :—'As for Dr. Warren, death owed him a grudge for the numerous victims rescued from his dart, and at length revenged himself by that fatal blow on the stomach.' *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Thirteenth Report, App. viii. 281. 'Dr. Warren used to say that if

a physician had common sense when he first settled at Bath, he soon lost it all in looking out for bile and giving in to the medical cant of the place.' *European Magazine*, 1798, p. 240.

¹ The Rev. C. G. Andrews, Wouldham Rectory, Rochester, a great-grandson of Dr. Heberden, has the copy of the *Lives* that belonged to Dr. Heberden, inscribed (not in Johnson's writing) 'From the author.'

² Johnson was twice at Salisbury—once in 1762, on his way to Devonshire (Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 214), and once in 1783, sixteen months before his death. *Life*, iv. 234.

³ *Ante*, ii. 202.

'Après avoir parlé de la fausseté  
President

President of his College (Jesus) at Oxford, Dr. Bernard<sup>1</sup>. Dr. Bernard ventured to put a joke upon Johnson; but being terrified by a tremendous snarl, 'Indeed, indeed, Doctor, believe me,' said he, 'I meant nothing.' 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'if you *mean* nothing, *say* nothing,' and was quiet for the rest of the evening.

BY OZIAS HUMPHRY, R.A.

['In a letter to his brother, the Rev. William Humphry, dated September 19, 1764.' Croker's *Boswell*, ix. 257.

For Johnson's letters to Humphry see *Life*, iv. 268, and for anecdotes of him see Northcote's *Reynolds*, ii. 174, 248.]

The day after I wrote my last letter to you I was introduced to Mr. Johnson by a friend: we passed through three very dirty rooms to a little one that looked like an old counting-house, where this great man was sat at his breakfast<sup>2</sup>. The furniture of this room was a very large deal writing-desk<sup>3</sup>, an old walnut-tree table, and five ragged chairs of four different sets. I was very much struck with Mr. Johnson's appearance, and could hardly help thinking him a madman for some time, as he sat waving over his breakfast like a lunatic<sup>4</sup>.

de tant de vertus apparentes, il est raisonnable de dire quelque chose de la fausseté du mépris de la mort. . . . Il y a de la différence entre souffrir la mort constamment, et la mépriser. Le premier est assez ordinaire; mais je crois que l'autre n'est jamais sincère. . . . La raison, dans laquelle on croit trouver tant de ressources, est trop faible en cette rencontre pour nous persuader de ce que nous voulons. C'est elle au contraire qui nous trahit le plus souvent, et qui, au lieu de nous inspirer le mépris de la mort, sert à nous découvrir ce qu'elle a d'affreux et de terrible.'

La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes*, No. 528.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson was for some days in June, 1782, the guest of Dr. Edwards, Vice-Principal of Jesus College. *Letters*, ii. 257, n. 4; 261, n. 1. No Principal [not President] of Jesus bore the name of Bernard. The story which follows resembles one told of the elder Pitt.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson in 1764 was living in Inner Temple Lane. *Life*, i. 350, n. 3, 375, n. 1; iii. 406 n.

<sup>3</sup> No doubt the desk in the Library of Pembroke College.

<sup>4</sup> Hogarth, eleven years earlier, He

He is a very large man, and was dressed in a dirty brown coat and waistcoat, with breeches that were brown also (though they had been crimson), and an old black wig: his shirt collar and sleeves were unbuttoned; his stockings were down about his feet, which had on them, by way of slippers, an old pair of shoes. He had not been up long when we called on him, which was near one o'clock: he seldom goes to bed till near two in the morning; and Mr. Reynolds tells me he generally drinks tea about an hour after he has supped<sup>1</sup>. We had been some time with him before he began to talk, but at length he began, and, faith, to some purpose! every thing he says is as *correct* as a *second edition*<sup>2</sup>: 't is almost impossible to argue with him, he is so sententious and so knowing.

I asked him, if he had seen Mr. Reynolds's pictures lately. 'No, Sir.' 'He has painted many fine ones.' 'I know he has,' he said, 'as I hear he has been fully employed.' I told him, I imagined Mr. Reynolds was not much pleased to be overlooked by the Court<sup>3</sup>, as he must be conscious of his superior merit. 'Not at all displeased,' he said, 'Mr. Reynolds has too much good sense to be affected by it: when he was younger he believed it would have been agreeable; but now he does not want their favour. It has ever been more profitable to be popular among the people than favoured by the King: it is no reflection on Mr. Reynolds not to be employed by them; but it will be a reflection for ever on the Court not to have employed him. The King, perhaps, knows nothing but that

calling on Richardson, 'while he was talking, perceived a person standing at a window in the room, shaking his head, and rolling himself about in a strange ridiculous manner. He concluded that he was an ideot, whom his relations had put under the care of Mr. Richardson.' It was Johnson. *Life*, i. 146.

<sup>1</sup> 'With tea solaces the midnight.'  
*Ib.* i. 313, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 391.

<sup>3</sup> Five years later Reynolds was

knighted, when Johnson, who was at that time an abstainer, 'drank one glass of wine to the health of Sir Joshua Reynolds.' *Ante*, ii. 322. See also *Life*, iv. 366.

'It has often been remarked that the King never commissioned Sir Joshua for a single picture; indeed he never sat to him but once, when his portrait was painted by him for the Royal Academy.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, ii. 80.

he employs the best painter; and as for the Queen, I don't imagine she has any other idea of a picture but that it is a thing composed of many colours.'

When Mr. Johnson understood that I had lived some time in Bath, he asked me many questions that led, indeed, to a general description of it. He seemed very well pleased; but remarked that men and women bathing together as they do at Bath is an instance of barbarity that he believed could not be paralleled in any part of the world<sup>1</sup>. He entertained us about an hour and a half in this manner; then we took our leave. I must not omit to add, that I am informed he denies himself many conveniences, though he cannot well afford any, that he may have more in his power to give in charities.

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BY DR. LETTSOM.

[From *Memorials of John Coakley Lettsom*, London, 1817, 2 vols.; vol 1, part 2, p. 78.]

Jan. 13, 1785.

Dr. Johnson was a pious man; attached, I confess, to established system, but it was from principle. In company I neither found him austere nor dogmatical; he certainly was not polite, but he was not rude; he was familiar with suitable company; but his language in conversation was sententious; he was sometimes jocular, but you felt as if you were playing with a lion's paw. His body was large, his features strong, his face scarred and furrowed with the scrophula; he had a heavy look; but when he spoke it was like lightning out of a dark cloud.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Willis in *Humphry Clinker* (ed. 1792, i. 77) describes the bath:—  
'The ladies wear jackets and petticoats of brown linen, with chip hats,

in which they fix their handkerchiefs, to wipe the sweat from their faces.'  
See also *ib.* pp. 85, 90.

In

Feb. 8, 1785.

In social company, when he unbended from critical austerity, he afforded the finest dessert to a rational repast. I once dined with him, Wilkes, Boswell, and Lee the American<sup>1</sup>; what a group! 'It was ungrateful,' said Lee, 'for the Scotch who, when emigrants, always found an asylum in America, to be the most violent opponents to American independence, and to oppose their benefactors in the cabinet and in the field.' 'The obligation,' replied Boswell, 'was not so considerable, when it is understood that the Americans sent the Scotch emigrants to Cape Fear, and such-like barren regions.' 'I think,' said Johnson, 'they acted like philosophers.' 'Why?' Boswell inquired. 'Because,' added Johnson, 'if you turn a starved cow into clover, it will soon kill itself by the sudden transition; and if the Scotch, famished in their own country, had been placed in the more fruitful parts of America, they would have burst by a bellyful, like the cattle in clover<sup>2</sup>.' Nobody enjoyed a laugh at the expense of the Scotch more than Boswell, at least when it came from Johnson; and the latter appeared to do it in play; but his play was as rough as that of a bear, and you felt fearful of coming within the embraces of so fierce an animal' (p. 84).

# MISCELLANEOUS ANECDOTES.

[From Croker's *Boswell*, vol. x. pp. 131-142.]

A gentleman once told Dr. Johnson, that a friend of his, looking into the Dictionary which the Doctor had lately published, could not find the word *ocean*. 'Not find ocean!'

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 68; *Letters*, i. 397.  
<sup>2</sup> 'Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, all barrenness

is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren.'" *Life*, iii. 76. Boswell's 'long head' (*ib.* iv. 166), which retained a great deal of the conversation, here failed him, for all that Lettsom reports is new.



exclaimed our Lexicographer; 'Sir, I doubt the veracity of your information!' He instantly stalked into his library; and, opening the work in question with the utmost impatience, at last triumphantly put his finger upon the subject of research, adding, 'There, Sir; there is *ocean*!' The gentleman was preparing to apologise for the mistake; but Dr. Johnson good-naturedly dismissed the subject, with 'Never mind it, Sir; perhaps your friend spells *ocean* with an *s*!'

The late Mr. Crauford, of Hyde Park Corner, being engaged to dinner, where Dr. Johnson was to be, resolved to pay his court to him; and, having heard that he preferred Donne's Satires to Pope's version of them, said, 'Do you know, Dr. Johnson, that I like Dr. Donne's original Satires better than Pope's.' Johnson said, 'Well, Sir, I can't help that.'

Miss Johnson, one of Sir Joshua's nieces<sup>1</sup> (afterwards Mrs. Deane), was dining one day at her uncle's with Dr. Johnson and a large party: the conversation happening to turn on music, Johnson spoke very contemptuously of that art, and added, 'that no man of talent, or whose mind was capable of better things, ever would or could devote his time and attention to so idle and frivolous a pursuit.' The young lady, who was very fond of music, whispered her next neighbour, 'I wonder what Dr. Johnson thinks of King David.' Johnson overheard her, and, with great good humour and complacency, said, 'Madam, I thank you; I stand rebuked before you, and promise that, on one subject at least, you shall never hear me talk nonsense again.'

The honours of the University of Cambridge were once

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, in the Preface to the *Dictionary*, writes:—'It is remarkable that in reviewing my collection [of authorities] I found the word *SEA* unexemplified.' *Works*, v. 45.

<sup>2</sup> 'Pope published a revival in smoother numbers of Dr. Donne's Satires. . . . He seems to have known their imbecility, and therefore sup-

pressed them while he was yet contending to rise in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their deficiencies more likely to be imputed to Donne than to himself.' *Works*, viii. 295.

<sup>3</sup> Reynolds's sister Elizabeth married William Johnson. Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 4.

performed

performed to Dr. Johnson, by Dr. Watson, afterwards Bishop of Llandaff, and then Professor of Chemistry, &c.<sup>1</sup> After having spent the morning in seeing all that was worthy of notice, the sage dined at his conductor's table, which was surrounded by various persons, all anxious to see so remarkable a character, but the moment was not favourable; he had been wearied by his previous exertions, and would not talk. After the party had dispersed, he said, 'I was tired, and would not take the trouble, or I could have set them right upon several subjects, Sir; for instance, the gentleman who said he could not imagine how any pleasure could be derived from hunting,—the reason is, because man feels his own vacuity<sup>2</sup> less in action than when at rest.'

Mr. Williams, the rector of Wellesbourne, in Warwickshire, mentioned having once, when a young man, performed a stage-coach journey with Dr. Johnson, who took his place in the vehicle, provided with a little book, which his companion soon discovered to be Lucian<sup>3</sup>: he occasionally threw it aside, if struck by any remark made by his fellow-travellers, and poured forth his knowledge and eloquence in a full stream, to the delight and astonishment of his auditors. Accidentally, the first subject which attracted him was the digestive faculties of dogs, from whence he branched off as to the powers of digestion in various species of animals, discovering such stores of information, that this particular point might have been supposed to have formed his especial study, and so it was with every other subject started. The strength of his memory was not less astonishing than his eloquence; he quoted from various authors, either in support of his own argument or to confute those of his companions, as readily, and apparently as accurately, as if the works had been in his hands. The coach halted, as usual, for dinner, which seemed to be a deeply interesting business to Johnson, who

<sup>1</sup> For Johnson's visit to Cambridge, see *Life*, i. 487, 517; *Letters*, i. 183 *n*. Watson was a Fellow of Trinity College. See *ante*, i. 307 *n*.

<sup>2</sup> 'I am now to review the last year, and find little but dismal vacuity,

neither business nor pleasure.' *Ante*, i. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson in the Harwich stage-coach read *Pomponius Mela de Situ Orbis*, and in the Oxford stage-coach Euripides. *Life*, i. 465; iv. 311.

vehemently

vehemently attacked a dish of stewed carp, using his fingers only in feeding himself<sup>1</sup>.

Bishop Percy was at one time on a very intimate footing with Dr. Johnson, and the Doctor one day took Percy's little daughter upon his knee, and asked her what she thought of *Pilgrim's Progress*? The child answered, that she had not read it. 'No!' replied the Doctor; 'then I would not give one farthing for you;' and he set her down and took no further notice of her.

My venerable friend, Dr. Fisher, of the Charter-house, now in his eighty-fifth year, informs me (says Mr. Croker) that he was one of the party who dined with Dr. Johnson at University College, Oxford, in March, 1776<sup>3</sup>. There were present, he says, Dr. Wetherell, Johnson, Boswell, Coulson, Scott, Gwynn, Dr. Chandler the traveller, and Fisher, then a young Fellow of the College<sup>4</sup>. He recollects one passage of the conversation at dinner:—Boswell quoted '*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*'<sup>5</sup>, and asked where it was. After a pause Dr. Chandler

<sup>1</sup> 'I took the liberty to observe to Dr. Johnson, that he always eat fish with his fingers. "Yes," said he; "but it is because I am short-sighted, and afraid of bones, for which reason I am not fond of eating many kinds of fish, because I must use my fingers."' *Life*, v. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 332.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, ii. 445.

<sup>4</sup> For Dr. Wetherell, the Master of the College, see *ib.* ii. 440, and for Coulson, *Letters*, i. 325. Scott should mean William Scott (Lord Stowell) who had not yet left Oxford for London; but 'he was gone to the country.' *Life*, ii. 440. John Scott (Earl of Eldon), who had been in 1774-5 Fisher's colleague as a tutor, but was married and settled in London, says he was at the dinner. Twiss's *Eldon*, ed. 1846, i. 65. For Gwynn, see *Life*, ii. 438. Of Chandler's

*Travels* Johnson wrote:—'Do not buy them; they are duller than Twiss's.' *Letters*, i. 321.

<sup>5</sup> The 'learned friend' mentioned in my note on this passage (*Life*, iv. 181) was the late Professor Chandler, Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford.

Burton quotes the saying as 'Quos Jupiter perdit dementat.' *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. 1660, p. 6.

In a letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1771, p. 262, signed W. W. (perhaps William Warburton), *Fortuna quem vult perdere stultum facit* is quoted as a fragment of Publius Syrus.

Dryden translates it:—

'For those whom God to ruin has designed

He fits for fate, and first destroys their mind.'

*The Hind and the Panther*, Part iii. l. 2387.

said

said in Horace,—another pause; then Fisher remarked, that he knew no metre in Horace to which the words could be reduced; upon which Johnson said dictatorially ‘The young man is right.’ Dr. Fisher recollects another conversation during this visit to Oxford, when there was a Mr. Mortimer<sup>1</sup>, a shallow, vulgar man, who had no sense of Johnson’s superiority, and talked a great deal of flippant nonsense. At last he said, that ‘metaphysics were all *stuff*—nothing but vague words.’ ‘Sir,’ said Johnson, ‘do you know the meaning of the word *metaphysics*?’ ‘To be sure,’ said the other. ‘Then, Sir, you must know that two and two make four, is a metaphysical proposition.’—‘I deny it,’ rejoined Mortimer, ‘’t is an arithmetical one; I deny it utterly.’ ‘Why, then, Sir,’ said Johnson, ‘if you deny that we arrive at that conclusion by a metaphysical process, I can only say, that *plus in und horâ unus asinus negabit, quam centum philosophi in centum annis probaverint*<sup>2</sup>.’

The following letter was written with an agitated hand, from the very chamber of death, by the amiable Bennet Langton, and obviously interrupted by his feelings<sup>3</sup>. It is not addressed, but Mr. Langton’s family believe it was intended for Mr. Boswell:

‘MY DEAR SIR,—After many conflicting hopes and fears respecting the event of this heavy return of illness which has assailed our honoured friend, Dr. Johnson, since his arrival from Lichfield, about four days ago the appearances grew more and more awful, and this afternoon at eight o’clock, when I arrived at his house to see how he should be going on, I was acquainted

<sup>1</sup> John James wrote on Sept. 16, 1781:—‘No news in Oxford, except the death of the Head of Lincoln, who is succeeded by one Mortimer, a notorious sloven. The blackguard Stinton was a beau to him.’ *Letters of Radcliffe and James*, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> According to Lord Eldon, Johnson quoted these words as the saying of ‘an author.’ Twiss’s *Eldon*, ed. 1846, i. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Hawkins writes:—‘At eleven,

the same evening, Mr. Langton came to me, and in an agony of mind gave me to understand that our friend had wounded himself in several parts of the body.’ *Ante*, ii. 134. If this account is true, Langton thought that Johnson had wounded himself in the intention, not to lengthen his life, as was really the case, but to shorten it. It was perhaps the shock given on learning of these wounds which interrupted the letter.

at the door, that about three quarters of an hour before, he had breathed his last. I am now writing in the room where his venerable remains exhibit a spectacle, the interesting solemnity of which, difficult as it would be in any sort to find terms to express, so to you, my dear Sir, whose own sensations will paint it so strongly, it would be of all men the most superfluous to attempt to——'

I have (says Mr. W. E. Surtees) heard my grandmother, a daughter, by his first wife, of the Dean of Ossory<sup>1</sup> (who married secondly Miss Charlotte Cotterell), speak of Dr. Johnson, as having frequently seen him in her youth. On one occasion, probably about 1762-3, he spent a day or two in the country with her father, and went with the family to see the house of a rich merchant. The owner—all bows and smiles—seemed to exult in the opportunity of displaying his costly articles of *virtù* to his visitor, and, in going through their catalogue, observed, 'And this, Dr. Johnson, is *Vesuvius Cæsar*.' My grandmother, then but a girl, could not suppress a titter, when the Doctor turned round, and thus, alike to the discomfiture of the merchant and herself, sternly rebuked her aloud, 'What is the child laughing at? Ignorance is a subject for pity—not for laughter.'

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BY DR. JOHN MOORE.

[From his *Life of Smollett*, prefixed to Smollett's *Works*, ed. 1797, vol. i. p. 154.]

In Boswell's *Life of Johnson*<sup>2</sup> mention is made of an observation of his respecting the manner in which argument ought to be rated. As Mr. Boswell has not recorded this with his usual precision, and as I was present at Mr. Hoole's at the time mentioned by Mr. Boswell, I shall here insert what passed, of which I have a perfect recollection. Mention having been

<sup>1</sup> John Lewis, Dean of Ossory, married Johnson's friend Charlotte Cotterell. *Life*, i. 382; *Letters*, ii. 310.  
<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iv. 281.

made that counsel were to be heard at the bar of the House of Commons, one of the company at Mr. Hoole's asked Sir James Johnston<sup>1</sup> if he intended to be present. He answered, that he believed he should not, because he paid little regard to the arguments of counsel at the bar of the House of Commons. 'Wherefore do you pay little regard to their arguments, Sir?' said Dr. Johnson. 'Because,' replied Sir James, 'they argue for their fee.' 'What is it to you, Sir,' rejoined Dr. Johnson, 'what they argue for? you have nothing to do with their motive, but you ought to weigh their argument. Sir, you seem to confound argument with assertion, but there is an essential distinction between them. Assertion is like an arrow shot from a long bow; the force with which it strikes depends on the strength of the arm that draws it. But argument is like an arrow from a cross-bow, which has equal force whether shot by a boy or a giant.'

The whole company was struck with the aptness and beauty of this illustration; and one of them said, 'That is, indeed, one of the most just and admirable illustrations that I ever heard in my life.' 'Sir,' said Dr. Johnson, 'the illustration is none of mine—you will find it in Bacon<sup>2</sup>.'

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BY JOHN NICHOLS.

[From *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 9 vols. 8vo. 1812-15; vol. ix. p. 779, &c. Croker's *Boswell*, x. 62.]

Of his birth-place, Lichfield, Dr. Johnson always spoke with a laudable enthusiasm. 'Its inhabitants,' he said, 'were more

<sup>1</sup> Member for Dumfries. His brother married a lady who inherited the wealth of Pulteney, Earl of Bath. *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. 203. Burns thus mentions Sir James in his *Epistle to Robert Graham*:—

'What Whig but melts for good  
Sir James?

Dear to his country by the names  
Friend, patron, benefactor!  
Not Pulteney's wealth can Pulteney save!

And Hopeton falls, the generous  
brave!

And Stewart, bold as Hector.'

<sup>2</sup> The quotation is from Boyle.  
*Life*, iv. 281, n. 3.

orthodox

orthodox in their religion, more pure in their language, and more polite in their manners than any other town in the kingdom'; and he often lamented that 'no city of equal antiquity and worth has been so destitute of a native to record its fame, and transmit its history to posterity'.

Mr. Cradock informs me, that he once accompanied Dr. Johnson and Mr. Steevens to Marybone Gardens, to see *La Serva Padrona* performed<sup>3</sup>. . . Mr. Steevens, being quite weary of the Burletta, exclaimed, 'There is no plot; it is merely an old fellow

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Johnson expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who, he said, were "the most sober, decent people in England, the genteelst in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English."' *Life*, ii. 463. 'Sir (said he) we are a city of philosophers, we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands.' *Ib.* p. 464.

Staffordshire, in which Lichfield is situated, was a stronghold of Toryism and even of Jacobitism. *Ib.* iii. 326.

Smollett, writing of Lichfield in 1747, says:—'Even the females at their assembly, and the gentlemen at the races, affected to wear the checquered stuff by which the Prince Pretender and his followers had been distinguished. Divers noblemen on the course were insulted as apostates.' Smollett's *England*, ed. 1800, iii. 259.

Nevertheless, 'in an answer of the Bailiffs and Justices of the Peace of the City of Lichfield, dated March 8, 1743, directed to the Lords of his Majesty's Council, they say that they have made diligent search throughout the city, and certify that all was peaceable and quiet; that there was "no Papist (save only two or three women) or Nonjuror in the city; neither have we amongst us any Quaker, or above two Dissenters

from the established Church of England, under any denomination whatsoever;" and that the whole city was zealously attached to his Majesty's person and government.' Harwood's *History of Lichfield*, p. 309.

Lord Stanhope wrote from Lichfield on Oct. 6, 1705, to Atterbury:—'I must confess (except it be your brother Binckes) I lose no conversation by being deaf in this place, which is just as well stocked with good manners and polite conversation as your friend Dr. Wake is with deep learning, solid sense and the knack of writing intelligible English!' Atterbury's *Correspondence*, ii. 25. Binckes, a Prebendary of Lichfield, was supposed to be the author of a pamphlet which gave rise to a controversy between Atterbury and Wake. *Ib.*

<sup>2</sup> In 1806 the Rev. Thomas Harwood published a *History of Lichfield*.

<sup>3</sup> *La Serva Padrona* was a burletta composed by Pergolesi, a Neapolitan who was born in 1704; it was translated into English by Stephen Storace, father of the composer of that name. *Memoirs of J. Cradock*, iii. 345.

For another visit to the gardens where, if we can trust Steevens (a very untrustworthy authority), Johnson was 'the ringleader of a successful riot,' see *Life*, iv. 324.

cheated

cheated and deluded by his servant; it is quite foolish and unnatural.' Johnson instantly replied, 'Sir, it is not *unnatural*. It is a scene that is acted in my family every day in my life.' This did not allude to the maid servant, however, so much as to two distressed ladies, whom he generously supported in his house, . . . who were always quarrelling<sup>1</sup>. These ladies presided at Dr. Johnson's table by turns when there was company; which, of course, would produce disputes. I ventured one day to say, 'Surely, Dr. Johnson, Roxana for this time should take place of Statira.' 'Yes, Sir,' replied the Doctor; 'but, in my family, it has never been decided which is Roxana, and which is Statira.'

It happened that I was in Bolt Court on the day when Mr. Henderson<sup>2</sup>, the justly celebrated actor, was first introduced to Dr. Johnson; and the conversation turning on dramatic subjects, Henderson asked the Doctor's opinion of *Dido* and its author. 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'I never did the man an injury; yet he would read his tragedy to me<sup>3</sup>.'

The following particulars of the unfortunate Samuel Boyse<sup>4</sup> I had from Dr. Johnson's own mouth:—'By addicting himself to low vices, among which were gluttony and extravagance, Boyse rendered himself so contemptible and wretched, that he frequently was without the least subsistence for days together. After squandering away in a dirty manner any money which he acquired, he has been known to pawn all his apparel.'

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulines. He wrote to Mrs. Thrale on Nov. 14, 1778:—'Williams hates everybody. Levett hates Desmoulines, and does not love Williams. Desmoulines hates them both. Poll [Miss Carmichael] loves none of them.' *Life*, iii. 368; *Letters*, ii. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 318; *Life*, iv. 244.

Southey, when he was engaged on Cowper's *Life*, wrote:—'Henderson gave such a lift to Cowper by reciting John Gilpin, that a page or two to his honour might with great propriety be introduced.' Southey's *Life and Corres.*, vi. 275. After one of

these recitations 'a person who wriggled up to him said, "Pray, who *did* teach you to read, Mr. Henderson?" "My mother, Sir," was his reply.' Southey's *Cowper*, ii. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson wrote to Dr. Taylor on May 3, 1777:—'Mr. Lucas has just been with me. He has compelled me to read his tragedy, which is but a poor performance.' *Letters*, ii. 9. In a note I suggest that he may be the author mentioned above; but in this I was mistaken, for it was Joseph Reed.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iv. 407, n. 4, 442; *ante*, i. 228.



Dr. Johnson once collected a sum of 'money to redeem his clothes, which in two days after were pawned again. 'This,' said the Doctor, 'was when my acquaintances were few, and most of them as poor as myself. The money was collected by shillings.'

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1784, only six days before his death, Dr. Johnson requested to see the editor of these anecdotes<sup>1</sup>, from whom he had borrowed some of the early volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, with a professed intention to point out the pieces which he had written in that collection. The books lay on the table, with many leaves doubled down, particularly those which contained his share in the Parliamentary Debates; and such was the goodness of Johnson's heart, that he solemnly declared, that 'the only part of his writings which then gave him any compunction, was his account of the debates in the *Magazine*; but that at the time he wrote them he did not think he was imposing on the world<sup>2</sup>. The mode,' he said, 'was to fix upon a speaker's name, then to conjure up an answer. He wrote these debates with more velocity than any other of his productions; often three columns of the magazine within the hour. He once wrote ten pages in one day.'

Dr. Johnson said to me, 'I may possibly live, or rather breathe, three days, or perhaps three weeks; but I find myself daily and gradually worse.' . . . Before I quitted him, he asked, whether any of the family of Faden, the printer, were living. Being told that the geographer near Charing Cross was Faden's son, he said, after a short pause, 'I borrowed a guinea of his father near thirty years ago; be so good as to take this, and pay it for me<sup>3</sup>.'

During the whole time of my intimacy with him, he rarely permitted me to depart without some sententious advice. At the latest of these affecting interviews, . . . his words at parting were, 'Take care of your eternal salvation. Remember to

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 407; *ante*, i. 446.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 342.

<sup>3</sup> Faden for a few weeks had had a share in the *Universal Chronicle*

in which the *Idler* was published, so that he could have stopped the guinea out of the money due to Johnson. *Life*, i. 330, n. 3; *ante*, i. 447.

observe

observe the Sabbath. Let it never be a day of business, nor wholly a day of dissipation<sup>1</sup>. He concluded his solemn farewell with, 'Let my words have their due weight. They are the words of a dying man.' I never saw him more. In the last five or six days of his life but few even of his most intimate friends were admitted. Every hour that could be abstracted from his bodily pains and infirmities, was spent in prayer and the warmest ejaculations; and in that pious, praiseworthy, and exemplary manner, he closed a life begun, continued, and ended in virtue<sup>2</sup>.

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BY THE REV. MR. PARKER.

[The following anecdotes are told by Mr. Parker, from the relation of Mrs. Aston and her sister.—Croker's *Boswell*, ix. 249.]

Dr. Johnson's friendship for Mrs. Elizabeth Aston<sup>3</sup> commenced at the palace in Lichfield, the residence of Mr. Walmesley<sup>4</sup>: with Mrs. Gastrel he became acquainted in London, at the house of her brother-in-law, Mr. Hervey<sup>5</sup>. During the Doctor's annual visits to his daughter-in-law, Lucy Porter, he spent much of his time at Stow Hill<sup>6</sup>, where Mrs. Gastrel and Mrs. Elizabeth Aston resided. They were the daughters of Sir Thomas Aston<sup>7</sup>, of Aston Hall in Cheshire, of whom it is said, that being applied to for some account of his family, to illustrate the history of Cheshire, he replied, that 'the title and estate had descended from father to son for thirty generations, and that he believed they were neither much richer nor much poorer than they were at first.'

<sup>1</sup> 'He said he would not have Sunday kept with rigid severity and gloom, but with a gravity and simplicity of behaviour.' *Life*, ii. 72. See *ante*, i. 17, 301.

<sup>2</sup> 'In all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee.' *The Order of the Holy Communion, Book of Common Prayer*.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 83; *Letters*, i. 160 n.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, i. 81. He lived in the Bishop's palace, 'the scene of many happy days in Johnson's early life.' *Ib.* ii. 467.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, i. 254 n.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, ii. 470; *Letters*, i. 160.

<sup>7</sup> The family in the main line must be extinct, for there is no Aston in the list of Baronets.

He used to say of Dr. Hunter, master of the free grammar school, Lichfield, that he never taught a boy in his life—he whipped and they learned<sup>1</sup>. Hunter was a pompous man, and never entered the school without his gown and cassock, and his wig full dressed. He had a remarkably stern look, and Dr. Johnson said, he could tremble at the sight of Miss Seward<sup>2</sup>, she was so like her grandfather.

Mrs. Gastrel was on a visit at Mr. Hervey's, in London, at the time that Johnson was writing the *Rambler*; the printer's boy would often come after him to their house, and wait while he wrote off a paper for the press in a room full of company<sup>3</sup>. A great portion of the *Lives of the Poets* was written at Stow Hill<sup>4</sup>: he had a table by one of the windows, which was frequently surrounded by five or six ladies engaged in work or conversation. Mrs. Gastrel had a very valuable edition of Bailey's *Dictionary*<sup>5</sup>, to which he often referred. She told him that Miss Seward said that he had made poetry of no value by his criticism. 'Why, my dear lady,' replied he, 'if silver is dirty, it is not the less valuable for a good scouring<sup>6</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Langton one day asked him how he had acquired so accurate a knowledge of Latin; he said, 'My master whipt me very well. Without that, Sir, I should have done nothing.' *Life*, i. 45. 'Abating his brutality, he was a very good master.' *Ib.* ii. 146. See *ante*, i. 159.

<sup>2</sup> The epigram in Miss Edgeworth's *Absentee* (ch. 16)—

'Two passions alternately govern  
her fate,

Her business is love, but her  
pleasure is hate'—

was made by R. L. Edgeworth on Miss Seward. My authority for this statement is his grandson, Professor Edgeworth.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 203; iii. 42. 'The original manuscripts of the *Rambler*,' writes Hawkins (p. 382), 'have passed through my hands, and I am warranted to say that he never blotted

out a line.' See *Life*, i. 331, for his writing an *Idler* in half an hour.

<sup>4</sup> This is a great exaggeration. The composition of the *Lives* spread over not much less than four years, from Easter 1777 to the beginning of 1781. In 1778 and 1780 he did not visit Lichfield. In 1779 and 1781 he spent in it a few weeks.

<sup>5</sup> It is not easy to understand how any edition of Bailey could be 'very valuable.' See *ante*, ii. 95.

<sup>6</sup> See *Life*, iv. 331, for 'a high compliment which Johnson paid to Miss Seward' on her *Ode on Captain Cook*. R. L. Edgeworth wrote to Sir Walter Scott:—'Now, to my certain knowledge, most of the passages which have been selected in the various reviews of that work were written by Dr. Darwin.' *Memoirs of R. L. Edgeworth*, p. 399. Nevertheless Miss Seward wrote:—'So

A large

A large party had one day been invited to meet the Doctor at Stow-Hill: the dinner waited far beyond the usual hour, and the company were about to sit down, when Johnson appeared at the great gate; he stood for some time in deep contemplation, and at length began to climb it, and, having succeeded in clearing it, advanced with hasty strides towards the house. On his arrival Mrs. Gastrel asked him, 'if he had forgotten that there was a small gate for foot passengers by the side of the carriage entrance.' 'No, my dear lady, by no means,' replied the Doctor; 'but I had a mind to try whether I could climb a gate now as I used to do when I was a lad.'

One day Mrs. Gastrel set a little girl to repeat to him Cato's soliloquy, which she went through very correctly. The Doctor, after a pause, asked the child, 'What was to bring Cato to an end?' She said, it was a knife. 'No, my dear, it was not so.' 'My aunt Polly said it was a knife.' 'Why, aunt Polly's knife *may do*, but it was a *dagger*, my dear.' He then asked her the meaning of 'bane and antidote', which she was unable to give. Mrs. Gastrel said, 'You cannot expect so young a child to know the meaning of such words.' He then said, 'My dear, how many pence are there in *sixpence*?' 'I cannot tell, Sir,' was the half-terrified reply. On this, addressing himself to Mrs. Gastrel, he said, 'Now, my dear lady, can any thing be more ridiculous than to teach a child Cato's soliloquy, who does not know how many pence there are in sixpence?'

The ladies at Stow-Hill would occasionally rebuke Dr. Johnson for the indiscriminate exercise of his charity to all who applied

little value did the Society which struck a medal in honour of Captain Cook set upon my poem, that, while they avowedly presented one to every person who had taken public interest in his fate and virtues, they took no notice of me.' *Letters of Anna Seward*, iii. 32. It is to be hoped that the medal went to Dr. Darwin, whom she had the impudence to accuse, on another occasion, of ap-

propriating her verses. C. Darwin's *Life of Erasmus Darwin*, p. 90.

\* 'The soul secured in her existence smiles

At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.'

\* 'Thus am I doubly armed: my death and life,

My bane and antidote, are both before me.'

for

for it. 'There was that woman,' said one of them, 'to whom you yesterday gave half-a-crown, why she was at church to-day in long sleeves and ribands.' 'Well, my dear,' replied Johnson, 'and if it gave the woman pleasure, why should she not wear them?'<sup>1</sup>

He had long promised to write Mr. Walmesley's epitaph, and Mrs. W. waited for it, in order to erect a monument to her husband's memory<sup>2</sup>: procrastination, however, one of the Doctor's few failings, prevented its being finished; he was engaged upon it in his last illness, and when the physicians, at his own request, informed him of his danger, he pushed the papers from before him, saying, 'It was too late to write the epitaph of another, when he should so soon want one himself.'

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BY WILLIAM WELLER PEPYS.

[From a letter from Mr. Pepys to Mrs. Montagu in the *Montagu MSS.*, dated August 4, 1781. Croker's *Boswell*, x. 114. For W. W. Pepys, see *Life*, iv. 82; *Letters*, ii. 136.]

I met Johnson some time ago at Streatham, and such a day did we pass in disputation upon the *Life* of our dear friend Lord Lyttelton, as I trust it will never be my fate to pass again<sup>3</sup>. The moment the cloth was removed he challenged me to *come out* (as he called it), and say what I had to object to his *Life of Lord Lyttelton*. This, you see, was a call which, however dis-

<sup>1</sup> "What signifies," says some one, "giving half-pence to common beggars? they only lay it out in gin or tobacco?" "And why should they be denied such sweeteners of their existence?" says Johnson.' *Ante*, i. 204.

'He is an old man (said Burke of a beggar); and if gin be his comfort, let him have gin.' Prior's *Burke*, ed. 1872, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> She outlived Johnson nearly two

years, as her epitaph in Lichfield Cathedral shows. He has left a monument to Walmesley's memory in the *Lives of the Poets*. *Life*, i. 81. He wrote epitaphs on his father, mother and brother, a fortnight before his death. *Ib.* iv. 393. 'He would also,' says Hawkins (*ante*, ii. 123), 'have written in Latin verse an epitaph for Mr. Garrick, but found himself unequal to the task.'

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* i. 244; ii. 193.

agreeable to myself and the rest of the company, I could not but obey, and so *to it we went* for three or four hours without ceasing. He once observed, that it was the *duty* of a biographer to state *all* the failings of a respectable character<sup>1</sup>. . . . He took great credit for not having mentioned the *coarseness of Lord Lyttelton's manners*<sup>2</sup>. I told him, that if he would insert *that* in the next edition, I would excuse him all the rest<sup>3</sup>. We shook hands, however, at parting; which put me much in mind of the parting between Jaques and Orlando—'God be with you, let us meet as seldom as we can. Fare you well; I hope we shall be better strangers to you<sup>4</sup>.' We have not met again till last Tuesday, and then I must do him the justice to say that he did all in his power to show me that he was sorry for the former attack. But what hurts me all this while is, not that Johnson should go unpunished, but that our dear and respectable friend should . . . be handed down to succeeding generations under the appellation of poor Lyttelton<sup>5</sup>.

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BY THE REV. HASTINGS ROBINSON.

[Communicated to Mr. Croker by the Rev. Hastings Robinson, Rector of Great Warley, Essex. Croker's *Boswell*, x. 126.]

Miss Seward, her father<sup>6</sup> (the editor of *Beaumont and Fletcher*), the Rev. R. G. Robinson, of Lichfield, and Dr. Johnson, were passing the day at the palace at Lichfield, of which Mr. Seward was the occupier. The conversation turned upon Dr. Dodd,

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 155; *ante*, ii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> On the principle—

'Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes.'

Juvenal, *Satires*, ii. 24.

*Note by Croker.*

<sup>4</sup> 'JAQUES. God be wi' you; let's meet as little as we can.

ORLANDO. I do desire we may be

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better strangers.' *As You Like It*, Act iii. sc. 2. l. 273.

<sup>5</sup> For Miss Burney's description of this scene, see *Life*, iv. 65.

<sup>6</sup> The Rev. Thomas Seward. *Life*, ii. 467; *Letters*, i. 10. He lived in the Bishop's Palace, which, according to Johnson, Miss Porter might have had in 1763 for a rent of £20. *Ib.* i. 100.

who had been recently executed for forgery<sup>1</sup>. It proceeded as follows. MISS SEWARD. 'I think, Dr. Johnson, you applied to see Mr. Jenkinson<sup>2</sup> in his behalf.' JOHNSON. 'Why, yes, Madam; I knew it was a man having no interest, writing to a man who had no interest<sup>3</sup>; but I thought with myself, when Dr. Dodd comes to the place of execution, he may say, "Had Dr. Johnson written in my behalf, I had not been here," and (*with great emphasis*) I could not bear the thought!' MISS SEWARD. 'But, Dr. Johnson, would *you* have pardoned Dr. Dodd?' JOHNSON. 'Madam, had I been placed at the head of the legislature, I should certainly have signed his death-warrant; though no law, either human or divine, forbids our deprecating punishment, either from ourselves or others<sup>4</sup>.'

In one of his visits to Lichfield, Dr. Johnson called upon Mrs. Gastrell of Stowe<sup>5</sup>, near that city. She opened the Prayer-book, and pointed out a passage, with the wish that he would read it. He began, 'We have heard (*hēerd*) with our ears'—she stopped him, saying, 'Thank you, Doctor! you have read all I wish. I merely wanted to know whether you pronounced that word heard or hard<sup>6</sup>.' 'Madam,' he replied, "'heard" [*hēerd*] is

<sup>1</sup> On June 27, 1777. In August Johnson visited Lichfield, and afterwards Ashbourne, where he gave Boswell an account of Dodd. *Life*, iii. 139.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Jenkinson, first Earl of Liverpool. *Ib.* iii. 147; *ante*, ii. 283.

<sup>3</sup> Jenkinson had interest, for he had been Lord Bute's private secretary, and was one of the leaders among the 'King's Friends.'

<sup>4</sup> This anecdote, which comes through two people, must be received with caution. If Johnson used these words it was no doubt in 'talking for victory' (*ante*, i. 390). In the *Rambler*, No. 114, he wrote:—'All but murderers have at their last hour the common sensations of mankind pleading in their favour. They who would rejoice at the correction of a

thief are yet shocked at the thought of destroying him. His crime shrinks to nothing compared with his misery.' On Dodd's execution Johnson wrote to Boswell:—'Surely the voice of the public, when it calls so loudly, and calls only for mercy, ought to be heard.' *Life*, iii. 120. See also *ib.* iv. 207.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* ii. 470.

<sup>6</sup> She must have said 'heard or herd.' He told Boswell that his reason for pronouncing it *heard* was 'that if *heard* was pronounced *herd*, there would be a single exception from the English pronunciation of the syllable *ear*, and he thought it better not to have that exception.' *Ib.* iii. 197. When I was an undergraduate at Pembroke College one of the tutors always pronounced *break break*.

nonsense; there is but one word of that sound (*hard*) [herd] in the language <sup>1</sup>’

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BY MRS. ROSE.

[‘Communicated by Mrs. Rose, the daughter of Dr. Farr, of Plymouth, and the daughter-in-law of Dr. Johnson’s old friend, Dr. Rose of Chiswick.’ Croker’s *Boswell*, ix. 252. For Dr. Rose, see *Letters*, ii. 325.]

Dr. Mudge used to relate, as a proof of Dr. Johnson’s quick discernment into character:—When he was on a visit to Dr. Mudge at Plymouth<sup>2</sup>, the inhabitants of the Dock (now Devonport) were very desirous of their town being supplied with water, to effect which it was necessary to obtain the consent of the corporation of Plymouth; this was obstinately refused, the Dock being considered as an upstart. And a rival, Alderman Tolcher, who took a very strong part, called one morning, and immediately opened on the subject to Dr. Johnson, who appeared to give great attention, and when the alderman had ceased speaking, replied, ‘You are perfectly right, Sir; I would let the rogues die of thirst, for I hate a Docker from my heart.’ The old man went away quite delighted, and told all his acquaintances how completely ‘the great Dr. Johnson was on his side of the question <sup>3</sup>.’

It was after the publication of the *Lives of the Poets* that Dr. Farr, being engaged to dine with Sir Joshua Reynolds, mentioned, on coming in, that, in his way, he had seen a

<sup>1</sup> This seems a contradiction of what he said to Boswell.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 378.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Johnson, affecting to entertain the passions of the place, was violent in opposition; and, half laughing at himself for his pretended zeal where he had no concern, exclaimed, “No,

no! I am against the *Dockers*; I am a Plymouth man. Rogues! let them die of thirst. They shall not have a drop!”’ *Ib.* i. 379. Johnson at this time had not received a doctor’s degree, so that Mrs. Rose’s report is not quite accurate.



caricature, which he thought clever, of the nine muses flogging Dr. Johnson round Parnassus. The admirers of Gray and others, who thought their favourites hardly treated in the *Lives*, were laughing at Dr. Farr's account of the print, when Dr. Johnson was himself announced. Dr. Farr being the only stranger, Sir Joshua introduced him, and, to Dr. Farr's infinite embarrassment, repeated what he had just been telling them. Johnson was not at all surly on the occasion, but said, turning to Dr. Farr, 'Sir, I am very glad to hear this. I hope the day will never arrive when I shall neither be the object of calumny or ridicule, for then I shall be neglected and forgotten <sup>1</sup>.'

It was near the close of his life that two young ladies, who were warm admirers of his works, but had never seen himself, went to Bolt Court, and, asking if he was at home, were shown up stairs, where he was writing. He laid down his pen on their entrance, and, as they stood before him, one of the females repeated a speech of some length, previously prepared for the occasion. It was an enthusiastic effusion, which, when the speaker had finished, she panted for her idol's reply. What was her mortification when all he said was, 'Fiddle-de-dee, my dear.'

Much pains were taken by Mr. Hayley's friends to prevail on Dr. Johnson to read *The Triumphs of Temper*, when it was in its zenith <sup>2</sup>; at last he consented, but never got beyond the two first

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, i. 270; ii. 207.

<sup>2</sup> It was published in 1781. Horace Walpole wrote on March 3 of that year (*Letters*, viii. 15):—'For want of subject of admiration Sir Joseph Yorke is called by the newspapers a great man, and for want of taste the Monthly Reviewers call Mr. Hayley a great poet, though he has no more ear or imagination than they have.'

Gibbon wrote on July 3, 1782:—'I hope you like Mr. Hayley's poem; he rises with his subject, and, since Pope's death, I am satisfied that England has not seen so happy a

mixture of strong sense and flowing numbers.' *Misc. Works*, ii. 259.

Porson, who calls him 'poetarum et criticorum pessimus' (Porson's *Tracts*, ed. 1815, p. 307), wrote the following lines in ridicule of the flattery exchanged between Hayley and Miss Seward:—

'Miss Seward *loquitur*  
"Tuneful poet, Britain's glory,  
Mr. Hayley, that is you."

Hayley *respondet*  
"Ma'am, you carry all before you,  
Trust me, Lichfield Swan, you  
do."

pages, of which he uttered a few words of contempt that I have now forgotten. They were, however, carried to the author, who revenged himself by portraying Johnson as *Rumble* in his comedy of *The Mausoleum*<sup>1</sup>; and subsequently he published, without his name, a *Dialogue in the Shades between Lord Chesterfield and Dr. Johnson*, more distinguished for malignity than wit. Being anonymous, and possessing very little merit, it fell still-born from the press<sup>2</sup>.

Dr. Johnson sent his *Life of Lord Lyttelton* in MS. to Mrs. Montagu, who was much dissatisfied with it, and thought her friend every way underrated; but the Doctor made no alteration. When he subsequently made one of a party at Mrs. Montagu's, he addressed his hostess two or three times after dinner, with a view to engage her in conversation: receiving only cold and brief answers, he said, in a low voice, to General Paoli, who sat next him, and who told me the story, 'You see, Sir, I am no longer the man for Mrs. Montagu<sup>3</sup>.'

Miss Seward.

"Ode, didactic, epic, sonnet,  
Mr. Hayley, you're divine."

Hayley.

"Ma'am, I'll take my oath upon it,  
You yourself are all the  
Nine."

Watson's *Porson*, ed. 1861, p. 307.

'Hayley,' wrote Southey, 'has been worried as schoolboys worry a cat. I am treating him as a man deserves to be treated who was in his time, by popular election, king of the English poets,' &c. Southey's *Corres.* v. 179. 'I was born,' he adds, 'during his reign, and owe him something for having first made me acquainted by name with those Spanish writers of whom I afterwards knew much more than he did.' *Ib.* p. 210. 'Lord Holland,' says Rogers (*Table Talk*, p. 57), 'admires greatly the notes to his various poems.'

<sup>1</sup> One of *Plays of Three Acts*, written for a Private Theatre.

*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1784, p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> Reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1787, pp. 520, 612. Miss Seward wrote to Hayley:—'You must learn to write below yourself, to veil those rays of imagination, wit and knowledge which illuminate your writings, or it will always be in vain that you write anonymously.' Seward's *Letters*, &c., i. 302.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 64, 73; *Letters*, ii. 139, n. 1; *ante*, ii. 193.

Johnson had called the poet 'poor Lyttelton.' *Works*, viii. 491; *Life*, iv. 58, n. 1. Horace Walpole wrote on March 3, 1781:—'Poor Lyttelton were the words of offence. Mrs. Vesey sounded the trumpet. It has not, I believe, produced any alteration, but at a blue-stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan, Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber, and set up altar against altar there. There she told me as a mark of her high displeasure, that she would never ask him to  
Mrs.

Mrs. Piozzi related to me, that when Dr. Johnson one day observed, that poets in general preferred some one couplet they had written to any other, she replied, that she did not suppose he had a favourite; he told her she was mistaken—he thought his best lines were:—

‘The encumber’d oar scarce leaves the hostile coast,  
Through purple billows and a floating host’.

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#### FROM STEBBING SHAW.

[Anecdotes from Shaw's *History of Staffordshire*, i. 346, and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 495.]

The large willow-tree in the fore-ground of the view of Stow Hill has been generally supposed to have been planted by Dr. Johnson or his father, but as the Doctor never would admit the fact, it is probable that the vicinity of a building known by the name of the Parchment House occasioned such supposition. The business of parchment-making was carried on by old Mr. Johnson<sup>2</sup> at that place, until he had greatly enriched his servants and injured his own fortune. . . . Dr. Johnson never failed to visit this tree when he came to Lichfield. During his visit here in

dinner again. I took her side and fomented the quarrel.’ *Letters*, viii. 16.

Wraxall wrote of her (*Memoirs*, ed. 1815, i. 140):—‘Impressed probably from the suggestions of her own knowledge of the world, with a deep conviction of that great truth laid down by Molière which no Man of Letters ever disputed, that *Le vrai Amphytrion est celui chez qui l’on dine* [Le véritable Amphytrion est l’Amphytrion où l’on dîne], Mrs. Montagu was accustomed to open her house to a large company of both

sexes, whom she frequently entertained at dinner. A service of plate and a table plentifully covered disposed her guests to admire the splendour of her Fortune not less than the lustre of her Talents.’

<sup>1</sup> ‘The dreaded coast.’

*Vanity of Human Wishes*, l. 239.

See *Life*, i. 272, for his favourite line in his translation of Pope's *Messiah*.

<sup>2</sup> In connexion with this manufacture he was threatened with a prosecution by the Excise Board. *Life*, i. 36, n. 5.

1781 he desired Dr. Jones to give him an account of it, saying, it was by far the largest tree of the kind he had ever seen or heard of, and therefore wished to give an account of it in the *Philosophical Transactions*<sup>1</sup>.

From the attachment shown to it by the Doctor, it has ever since been regarded as little inferior in celebrity to Shakespeare's Mulberry, or the Boscobel Oak, and specimens of its wood have been worked into vases and other ornaments. He once took an admeasurement of it with a piece of string, assisted by a little boy, to whom he gave half a crown for his trouble. The dimensions of the willow in 1781, taken by Dr. Trevor Jones, and communicated in a letter to Dr. Johnson, are as follows:— 'The trunk rises to the height of twelve feet eight inches, and is then divided into fifteen large ascending branches, which, in very numerous and crowded subdivisions, spread at the top in a circular form, not unlike the appearance of a shady oak, inclining a little towards the east. The circumference of the trunk at the bottom is sixteen feet, in the middle eleven feet, and at the top, immediately below the branches, thirteen feet. The entire height of the tree is forty-nine feet, overshadowing a plain not far short of four thousand feet<sup>2</sup>.'

#### ADAM SMITH ON DR. JOHNSON.

[From *The Bee, or Literary Weekly Intelligencer*. By James Anderson. Edinburgh, 1791, 8vo. vol. iii. p. 2.]

Of the late Dr. Samuel Johnson, Dr. Smith had a very contemptuous opinion<sup>3</sup>. 'I have seen that creature,' said he,

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, ii. 40.

<sup>2</sup> A drawing of the tree is given in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, p. 412.

<sup>3</sup> 'Dr. Adam Smith once observed to me (writes Boswell) that "Johnson knew more books than any man alive."' *Life*, i. 71. In his review

of Johnson's *Dictionary* he speaks of 'the very extraordinary merit' of the author. *Ib.* i. 298, n. 2. The Preface to his *Shakespeare* he styled 'the most manly piece of criticism that was ever published in any country.' *Ante*, ii. 307.

For Johnson's 'unlucky altercation  
'bolt

'bolt up in the midst of a mixed company; and, without any previous notice, fall upon his knees behind a chair, repeat the Lord's Prayer and then resume his seat at table. He has played this freak over and over, perhaps five or six times in the course of an evening'. It is not hypocrisy, but madness. Though an honest sort of man himself, he is always patronising scoundrels<sup>2</sup>. Savage, for instance, whom he so loudly praises, was but a worthless fellow<sup>3</sup>; his pension of fifty pounds never lasted him longer than a few days<sup>4</sup>. [For an anecdote which here follows about Savage, see *ante*, i. 372 n.]

He was no admirer of the *Rambler* or the *Idler*, and hinted, that he had never been able to read them<sup>5</sup>. He was averse to the contest with America<sup>6</sup>, yet he spoke highly of Johnson's political pamphlets. But, above all, he was charmed with that respecting Falkland's Islands, as it displayed, in such forcible language, the madness of modern wars<sup>7</sup>.

with him,' see *Life*, iii. 331, and for the imaginary altercation, see *ib.* v. 369, n. 5. He was a member of the Literary Club. 'Smith, too, is now of our Club,' wrote Boswell. 'It has lost its select merit.' *ib.* ii. 430, n. 1.

<sup>1</sup> There is, I am convinced, great exaggeration in this, not probably on Smith's part, who was one of the most truthful of men, but on his reporter's. See *ib.* i. 483; v. 307.

<sup>2</sup> 'He was (writes Hawkins) one of the most quick-sighted men I ever knew in discovering the good and amiable qualities of others.' *Ante*, ii. 89.

'It has always been found that those whose extensive knowledge makes them best acquainted with the general course of human actions are precisely those who take the most favourable view of them. The greatest observer and the most profound thinker is invariably the most lenient judge.' Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England*, ed. 1872, i. 221.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell writes of Savage as 'a man of whom it is difficult to speak impartially, without wondering that he was for some time the intimate companion of Johnson.' *Life*, i. 161. Johnson never 'loudly praises' Savage, but exhibits his bad as fully as his good qualities.

<sup>4</sup> This Smith learnt from Johnson's *Life of Savage*, *Works*, viii. 153. If improvidence makes a worthless fellow, then Goldsmith was among the most worthless.

<sup>5</sup> There were those who could not read Adam Smith's great work. Miss Berry, who died in 1852, remembered 'how Charles Fox used to wonder that people could make such a fuss about that dullest of new books—Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.' H. Martineau's *Autobiography*, i. 438.

<sup>6</sup> Hume's *Letters to Strahan*, pp. 292-3, 296, 299.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, ii. 134, n. 3. See also *ante*, ii. 16.

DUGALD

DUGALD STEWART ON BOSWELL'S ANECDOTES.

[From Dugald Stewart's *Works*, ed. 1854, iv. 230.]

'I have often experienced,' Mr. Boswell gravely remarks in his *Tour with Dr. Johnson*, 'that scenes through which a man has passed, improve by lying in the memory; they grow mellow'.<sup>1</sup> To account for this curious mental phenomenon, which he plainly considered as somewhat analogous to the effect of time in improving the quality of wine, he has offered various theories, without however once touching upon the real cause—the imperceptible influence of imagination in supplying the decaying impressions of memory. The fact, as he has stated it, was certainly exemplified in his own case; for his stories, which I have often listened to with delight, seldom failed to *improve* wonderfully in such keeping as *his* memory afforded. They were much more amusing than even his printed anecdotes; not only from the picturesque style of his conversational, or rather his convivial diction, but perhaps still more from the humorous and somewhat whimsical seriousness of his face and manner. As for those anecdotes which he destined for the public, they were deprived of any chance of this sort of *improvement*, by the scrupulous fidelity with which (probably from a secret distrust of the accuracy of his recollection) he was accustomed to record every conversation which he thought interesting, a few hours after it took place.

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BY GILBERT STUART.

[The following anecdote I owe to the kindness of Mr. John Douglass Brown, jun., of the University Club, Philadelphia, who copied it from Stuart's *History of the Rise of the Arts of Design*

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, v. 333.

*in the United States*, vol. i. p. 181. This work is not in the British Museum. Stuart studied under West in 1778.]

Dr. Johnson called one morning on Mr. West [the painter] to converse with him on American affairs. After some time Mr. West said that he had a young American [Gilbert Stuart] living with him, from whom he might derive some information, and introduced Stuart. The conversation continued (Stuart being thus invited to take a part in it,) when the Doctor observed to Mr. West that the young man spoke very good English; and turning to Stuart rudely asked him where he had learned it. Stuart very promptly replied, 'Sir, I can better tell you where I did not learn it—it was not from your dictionary.' Johnson seemed aware of his own abruptness, and was not offended.

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BY THE REV. RICHARD WARNER.

[From Warner's *Tour through the Northern Counties*, published in 1802, vol. i. p. 105.]

During the last visit which the Doctor made to Lichfield<sup>1</sup>, the friends with whom he was staying missed him one morning at the breakfast-table. On inquiring after him of the servants, they understood he had set off from Lichfield at a very early hour, without mentioning to any of the family whither he was going. The day passed without the return of the illustrious guest, and the party began to be very uneasy on his account, when, just before the supper-hour, the door opened, and the Doctor stalked into the room. A solemn silence of a few minutes ensued, nobody daring to inquire the cause of his absence, which was at length relieved by Johnson addressing

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, during his last visit to Lichfield, told the Rev. Henry White that what is here recounted had happened a few years earlier. *Life*, iv. 372. White was the grandson of

Johnson's schoolmaster, Hunter, who married Lucy Porter, sister of Henry Porter, Mrs. Johnson's first husband. Nichols, *Lit. Hist.* vii. 362.

the lady of the house in the following manner: 'Madam, I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my departure from your house this morning, but I was constrained to it by my conscience. Fifty years ago, Madam, on this day, I committed a breach of filial piety, which has ever since lain heavy on my mind, and has not till this day been expiated. My father, you recollect, was a bookseller, and had long been in the habit of attending Uttoxeter market<sup>1</sup>, and opening a stall for the sale of his books during that day. Confined to his bed by indisposition, he requested me, this time fifty years ago, to visit the market, and attend the stall in his place. But, Madam, my pride prevented me from doing my duty, and I gave my father a refusal. To do away the sin of this disobedience, I this day went in a postchaise to Uttoxeter, and going into the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head, and stood with it bare an hour before the stall which my father had formerly used, exposed to the sneers of the standers-by and the inclemency of the weather; a penance by which I trust I have propitiated heaven for this only instance, I believe, of contumacy toward my father.'

---

BY MR. WICKINS.

['Dr. Harwood informs me that Mr. Wickins was a respectable draper in Lichfield. It is very true that Dr. Johnson was accustomed to call on him during his visits to his native town. The garden attached to his house was ornamented in the manner he describes, and no doubt was ever entertained of the exactness of his anecdotes.' Croker's *Boswell*, ix. 245.]

Walking one day with him in my garden at Lichfield, we entered a small meandering shrubbery, whose 'vista not lengthened to the sight,' gave promise of a larger extent. I observed, that he might perhaps conceive that he was entering

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 36, n. 3. Uttoxeter is so that not much trust can be about eighteen miles from Lichfield. put in this full report of Johnson's Warner visited Lichfield in 1801, words.



an extensive labyrinth, but that it would prove a deception, though I hoped not an unpardonable one. 'Sir,' said he, 'don't tell me of deception; a lie, Sir, is a lie, whether it be a lie to the eye or a lie to the ear.'

Passing on we came to an urn which I had erected to the memory of a deceased friend. I asked him how he liked that urn—it was of the true Tuscan order. 'Sir,' said he, 'I hate urns'; they *are* nothing, they *mean* nothing, convey no ideas but ideas of horror—would they were beaten to pieces to pave our streets!

We then came to a cold bath. I expatiated upon its salubrity. 'Sir,' said he, 'how do you do?' 'Very well, I thank you, Doctor.' 'Then, Sir, let well enough alone, and be content. I hate immersion<sup>2</sup>.' Truly, as Falstaff says, the Doctor 'would have a sort of alacrity at sinking<sup>3</sup>.'

Upon the margin stood the Venus de' Medicis—

'So stands the statue that enchants the world'

'Throw her,' said he, 'into the pond to hide her nakedness, and to cool her lasciviousness.'

He then, with some difficulty, squeezed himself into a root-house, when his eye caught the following lines from Parnell:—

'Go search among your idle dreams,  
Your busy, or your vain extremes,  
And find a life of equal bliss,  
Or own the next began in this<sup>5</sup>.'

The Doctor, however, not possessing any *silvan* ideas, seemed not to admit that heaven could be an Arcadia.

<sup>1</sup> He wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—  
'Mr. —'s erection of an urn looks like an intention to bury me alive.'  
*Letters*, ii. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson in his review of Lucas's *Essay on Waters* says:—'This instance does not prove that the cold bath produces health, but only that it will not always destroy it. He is well with the bath, he would have been well without it.' *Life*, i. 91,

*n.* 1. Johnson swam at Oxford and at Brighton. *Ib.* i. 348; *ante*, i. 224.

<sup>3</sup> 'You may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking.'  
*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act iii. sc. 5, l. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Thomson, *Summer*, l. 1346.

<sup>5</sup> 'Or own the next *begun* in this.'  
*A Hymn to Contentment*. Parnell, *Aldine Poets*, p. 99.

I then

I then observed him with Herculean strength tugging at a nail which he was endeavouring to extract from the bark of a plum tree; and having accomplished it, he exclaimed, 'There, Sir, I have done *some* good to-day; the tree might have festered. I make a rule, Sir, to do some good every day of my life.'

Returning through the house, he stepped into a small study or book-room. The first book he laid his hands upon was Harwood's *Liberal Translation of the New Testament*<sup>1</sup>. The passage which first caught his eye was from that sublime apostrophe in St. John, upon the raising of Lazarus, 'Jesus wept;' which Harwood had conceitedly rendered 'and Jesus, the Saviour of the world, burst into a flood of tears.' He contemptuously threw the book aside, exclaiming, 'Puppy!' I then showed him Sterne's *Sermons*<sup>2</sup>. 'Sir,' said he, 'do you ever read any others?' 'Yes, Doctor; I read Sherlock, Tillotson, Beveridge, and others.' 'Ay, Sir, *there* you drink the cup of salvation to the bottom; here you have merely the froth from the surface.'

Within this room stood the Shakspearean mulberry vase<sup>3</sup>, a pedestal given by me to Mr. Garrick, and which was recently sold, with Mr. Garrick's gems, at Mrs. Garrick's sale at Hampton. The Doctor read the inscription:—

'SACRED TO SHAKSPEARE,  
And in honour of  
DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.  
The Ornament—the Reformer  
Of the British Stage.'

<sup>1</sup> By Dr. Edward Harwood. Boswell describes it as 'a fantastical translation of the New Testament in modern phrase, and with a Socinian twist.' *Life*, iii. 39. 'I have written,' Harwood boasted, 'more books than any one person now living, except Dr. Priestley.' Nichols, *Lit. Anec.* ix. 580.

<sup>2</sup> See *Life*, iv. 109, *n.* 1, where Johnson, owning that he had read

Sterne's *Sermons*, said:—'I did read them, but it was in a stage-coach; I should not have even deigned to look at them had I been at large.'

<sup>3</sup> Johnson often visited at Lichfield Mrs. Gastrel, the wife of 'the clergyman who, with Gothick barbarity, cut down Shakspeare's mulberry-tree.' *Ib.* ii. 470.

'Ay

'Ay, Sir; Davy, Davy loves flattery; but here, indeed, you have flattered him as he deserves, paying a just tribute to his merit'.<sup>1</sup>

#### OF STYAN THIRLBY BY DR. JOHNSON.

[From a copy of the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam.

These anecdotes were sent by Johnson to John Nichols, who used them in a brief account of Thirlby. *Life*, iv. 161, n. 4; *Letters*, ii. 276.]

What I can tell of Thirlby, I had from those who knew him. I never saw him myself.

1. This was an exercise written by him, at the school of the Rev. Mr. Kilby of Leicester, who preserved it, and by whom his proficiency was praised as very quick. *He went through my school*, said Mr. Kilby, *in three years*, and his self-conceit was censured as very offensive. *He thought he knew more than all the school*. *Perhaps*, said a gentlewoman to whom this was told, *he thought rightly*.

2. After Thirlby's publication of *Justin*, Dr. Ashton, perhaps to show him that he had not done all which might have been done, published in one of the foreign journals some emendations of faulty passages, which when Thirlby saw he said slightly, that *any man who would, might have made them, and a hundred more*.

3. While he was a nominal Physician, he lived some time with the Duke of Chandos as Librarian, and is reported to have affected a perverse and insolent independence, so as capriciously to refuse his company when it was desired. It may be supposed they were soon weary of each other.

<sup>1</sup> 'Here is a man (said Johnson) who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character.' *Life*, iii. 263; *ante*, ii. 241.

Of Hannah More's flattery of Gar-

rick Johnson said, 'She is rewarded for it by Garrick.' *Life*, iii. 293. Mrs. Montagu flattered him in her foolish *Essay on Shakespeare* (*ib.* v. 245), and he in turn praised it. *Ib.* ii. 88.

4. He had originally contributed some notes to Theobald's *Shakespeare*, and afterwards talked of an edition of his own. But he went no further than to write some abusive remarks on the margin of Warburton's *Shakespeare* with a very few attempts at emendation, and those perhaps all in the first volume. In the other volumes he has only with great diligence counted the lines in every page. When this was told Dr. Jortin, *I have known him*, said he, *amuse himself with still slighter employment, he would write down all the proper names that he could call into his memory*. His mind seems to have been tumultuous and desultory, and he was glad to catch any employment that might produce attention without anxiety. Such employment, as Dr. Battie<sup>1</sup> has observed, is necessary for madmen.

N.B. In his cups he was jealous and quarrelsome. One of his pupils having been invited by him to supper, happened, as he was going away, to stumble at a Pile of Justin<sup>2</sup> which lay on the floor in quires; Thirlby told him that he kicked down the books in Contempt of the Editor, upon which the Pupil said, *it is now time to go away*.

N.B. One of his colloquial topicks was: That Nature apparently intended a kind of parity among her sons. Sometimes, said he, she deviates a little from her general purpose, and sends into the world a man of powers superior to the rest, of quicker intuition, and wider comprehension,—this man has all other men for his enemies, and would not be suffered to live his natural time, but that his excellences are ballanced by his failings. He that by intellectual exaltation thus towers above his contemporaries, is drunken, or lazy, or capricious, or by some defect or other is hindered from exerting his sovereignty of mind; he is thus kept upon the level, and thus preserved from the destruction which would be the natural consequence of universal hatred.

This is what I can remember.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. William Battie published in 1757 *A Treatise on Madness*. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1757, p. 605.

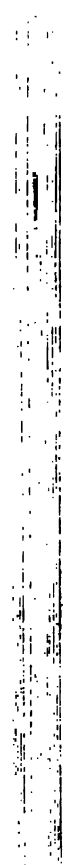
<sup>2</sup> Thirlby published in 1723 an edition of *Justin Martyr* in folio. *Ib.* 1784, p. 260.



LETTERS OF DR. JOHNSON

VOL. II.

F f



## LETTERS OF DR. JOHNSON

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[The following letters have been brought to my notice since the publication of my *Letters of Samuel Johnson*. Most of them, I believe, are now printed for the first time.]

TO [SAMUEL RICHARDSON<sup>1</sup>].

[1753.]

DEAR SIR,

I have been waiting on you every day and have not done it. I hear you take subscriptions for your two subsequent volumes.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson & Co., 5 Pall Mall Place, London.

That this letter was written to Richardson, and in the latter half of 1753, I infer from the following considerations:—

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1753, p. 543, in the list of books published in November is '*The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, 4 vols. in 8vo, boards, 17s.; 12mo, 10s. 6d.' Vol. v. 8vo and vols. v. and vi. 12mo are in the list for December, p. 593. Vol. vi. 8vo and vol. vii. 12mo are in the list for March, 1754, p. 144. The two editions were brought out simultaneously. In my copy of the octavo edition 'second edition' is added to the title-page of vol. vi; in the copy in the British Museum it appears also in vol. i. The book

seems to have been published earlier than November. Mrs. Carter wrote on Sept. 21:—'Mr. Richardson has been so good as to send me four volumes of his most charming work.' *Carter and Talbot Letters*, ii. 141. It is not improbable, however, that he sent her a copy before publication.

The 'two subsequent volumes' mentioned by Johnson were, no doubt, the concluding volumes of *Sir Charles Grandison*. His next letter shows, however, that it was the edition in seven volumes which he had received. The last three volumes of the edition in 12mo contain the same matter as the last two volumes of the edition in 8vo.

Lord Corke, who 'left his name,' is mentioned in the next letter as having seen Johnson or communicated with him.



I cannot conclude without recommending Miss Williams's little business to you. She is certainly qualified for her work, as much as any one that will ever undertake it, as she understands chimistery and many other arts with which Ladies are seldom acquainted, and I shall endeavour to put her and her helpmate into method. I can truly say that she deserves all the encouragement that can be given her, *for a being more pure from any thing vicious I have never known.*

I am,

Sir,

Your most obliged

and

most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Endorsed Mr. Johnson and Miss W.'s Plan.

28 March, 1754.

DEAR SIR,

TO [SAMUEL RICHARDSON<sup>1</sup>].

If you have any part of the universal History<sup>2</sup> yet unengaged, there [is] a Gentleman desirous of giving his assistance. To recommend authours' is dangerous, I have therefore sent you his Book [which] I think sets him on a level with most of those who are at present employed. I do not know him, but the Gentleman to whom he dedicates informs me that he is diligent and persevering. His Patron will be answerable for any books put into his hands, and perhaps for money if any be advanced, but no request of money has been made to me. [I have said nothing to Mr. Millar<sup>3</sup> for who should judge of an authour but you?] If you approve him you will therefore please to introduce him so as that no offence be given.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson & Co., 5 Pall Mall Place, London.

The letter is not addressed, but it can scarcely be doubted that it was written to Richardson.

<sup>2</sup> For a list of the writers of the

*Universal History*, see *Letters*, ii. 432; *ante*, i. 445.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Millar, the bookseller, 'the Maecenas of the age,' as Johnson called him. *Ante*, ii. 5. The brackets in which this paragraph is enclosed are in the original.

I am

I am in no great haste for an Answer. You may look into the book at leisure, for I do not expect that you should catch [at] it with the eagerness with which the world catches at yours<sup>1</sup>.

I am,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Feb. 3, 1755.

Pray favour me with an account of the translations of *Clarissa* which you have, I have a desire to borrow some of them<sup>2</sup>.

TO [? GEORGE HAY<sup>3</sup>, ESQ., D.C.L.].

SIR,

I should not have easily prevailed upon myself to trouble a Person in your high station with a request, had I not observed that Men have commonly benevolence in proportion to their capacities, and that the most extensive minds are most open to solicitation.

I had a Negro Boy named Francis Barber, given me by a Friend<sup>4</sup> whom I much respect, and treated by me for some

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, writing to Richardson about *Clarissa*, said:—‘Though the story is long every letter is short.’ *Letters*, i. 21.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Johnson, when he carried Mr. Langton to see Richardson, professed that he could bring him out into conversation, and used this allusive expression, “Sir, I can make him rear.” But he failed; for in that interview Richardson said little else than that there lay in the room a translation of his *Clarissa* into German.’ *Life*, iv. 28.

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam of Buffalo.

Francis Barber had run away from Johnson’s service three years earlier than the date of this letter, but had returned. *Life*, i. 239, n.; *Letters*, i. 66.

On his second flight Johnson sought Smollett’s aid in procuring his discharge from the navy which he had entered. Smollett applied to Wilkes. ‘Mr. Wilkes (writes Boswell), who upon all occasions has acted, as a private gentleman, with most polite liberality, applied to his friend Sir George Hay, then one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty; and Francis Barber was discharged, as he has told me, without any wish of his own.’ *Life*, i. 348.

It is most likely that it was to Sir George Hay, at that time Dr. Hay, that this letter was written.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Bathurst. ‘Barber was born in Jamaica, and was brought to England in 1750 by Colonel Bathurst, father of Johnson’s very intimate years

years with great tenderness. Being disgusted in the house he ran away to sea, and was in the *Summer* on board the ship stationed at Yarmouth to protect the fishery.

It [would] be a great pleasure and some convenience to me, if the Lords of the Admiralty would be pleased to discharge him, which as he is no seaman, may be done with little injury to the King's service.

You were pleased, Sir, to order his discharge in the Spring at the request of Mr. Wilkes, but I left London about that time and received no advantage from your favour. I therefore presume to entreat that you will repeat your order, and inform me how to cooperate with it so that it may be made effectual<sup>1</sup>.

I shall take the liberty of waiting at the Admiralty next Tuesday for your answer. I hope my request is not such as it is necessary to refuse, and what it is not necessary to refuse, I doubt not but your humanity will dispose you to grant, even to one that can make no higher pretensions to your favour, than,

Sir,

Your most obedient  
and

Most humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Gray's Inn<sup>2</sup>,

November the 9th, 1759.

TO THE REV. THOMAS PERCY<sup>3</sup>.

DEAR SIR,

I should not think our visit an event so important as to require any previous Notification, but that Mrs. Williams tells me, such was your desire<sup>4</sup>. We purpose to set out on Monday

friend, Dr. Bathurst. The Colonel by his will left him his freedom, and Dr. Bathurst was willing that he should enter into Johnson's service.' *Life*, i. 239n.; *ante*, i. 391. According to Lord Mansfield's decision Barber had become free the moment he landed in England, but it was not till 1772 that this decision was given. *Life*, iii. 87 n.

<sup>1</sup> According to Croker it was not till June of the following year that he was discharged. *Ib.* i. 350 n.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, i. 88.

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam, of Buffalo, New York.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson declined an invitation to visit Percy in September, 1761, as he wished to see the coronation. *Letters*,

morning

morning in the Berlin<sup>1</sup> in which we could not get places last week, and hope to have the honour in the evening<sup>2</sup> of telling you and Mrs. Percy that we are,

Your humble Servants,

SAM. JOHNSON.

London, June 23, 1764.

SIR,

TO DR. PERCY.

[Undated.]

I have sent you home a parcel of books, and do not know that I now retain any except *Gongora*<sup>3</sup> and *Araucana*<sup>4</sup>. If you can spare *Amadis* please to return it to,

Sir,

Your most humble,

SAM: JOHNSON<sup>5</sup>.

To the Reverend Dr. Percy.

DEAR SIR,

TO THE REV. EDWARD LYE<sup>6</sup>.

I see little to change in your proposals, only for *writing demy* I would read as more generally intelligible *writing paper*,

i. 91. For his visit in 1764, see *Life*, i. 486, and *ante*, ii. p. 217.

<sup>1</sup> 'I fixed my eye upon a small carriage Berlin fashion, which seemed the most convenient vehicle at a distance in the world.' Goldsmith's *Misc. Works*, ed. 1801, iv. 225. 'An old-fashioned four-wheeled covered carriage with a seat behind covered with a hood.' *New Eng. Dict.*

<sup>2</sup> Easton Mauduit, Percy's Vicarage, is in Northamptonshire, about 58 miles from London. Paterson's *Itinerary*, 1800, i. 384.

<sup>3</sup> 'Luis de Gongora y Argote (1561-1627). A Spanish lyric poet, noted as the founder of a highly metaphysical and artificial style from him named "Gongorism," and also called the "polished," "polite," and "cultivated" style.' *The Century Encyclopedia of Names*.

<sup>4</sup> 'Araucana. A heroic poem in 37 Cantos, by the Spanish poet Alonso de Ercilla.' *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> 'Dr. Percy informs me that "when a boy he (Johnson) was immoderately fond of reading romances of chivalry, and he retained his fondness for them through life; so that (adds his Lordship) spending part of a summer at my parsonage-house in the country, he chose for his regular reading the old Spanish romance of *Felixmarte of Hircania*, in folio, which he read quite through."' *Life*, i. 48.

<sup>6</sup> From the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson & Co. Johnson wrote to Boswell on March 9, 1766:—'Mr. Lye is printing his *Saxon and Gothick Dictionary*; all THE CLUB subscribes.' *Life*, ii. 17. See *Letters*, i. 121.

and

and I would stop at *a sufficient number of Subscribers*. What is added being, in my opinion, rather deficient in dignity.

The success of your subscription I do not doubt, and wish you were closely engaged at the press. Two sheets of Saxon letters will not be sufficient, there ought always to be one sheet printing, another in your hands for correction, and a third composing. There ought to be more, but this is the least, and if at Oxford they will not do this, you must not print at Oxford; for your Edition will be retarded beyond measure. They must get four sheets of letter at least, which will cost very little, there being few peculiar characters.

Stipulate with the printer to give you a certain number of sheets weekly, you ought not to have less than three, and you will not easily have more.

Miss Williams sends her best compliments to you and to Mrs. Calvert, and begs that you will return her thanks to Mrs. Percy for her letter, in the contents of which she takes great interest.

The Hare will come safe if it be directed to,

Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

Johnson's Court, Fleet-street,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Sept. 26, 1765.

To the Reverend Mr. Lye,

at Yardley, near Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire.

SIR,

TO [WILLIAM STRAHAN?].

I will tell you in a few words, what is, in my opinion, the most desirable state of Copyright or literary Property<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam of Buffalo.

I have two reasons for the belief that this letter was written to W. Strahan. In the first place, at the time when it was sold by auction (July, 1886) a large collection of letters written to Strahan was getting dispersed. In the second place, in the spring of the year in which John-

son gave his correspondent his opinion on copyright Strahan consulted Hume and Robertson on the same question. Their answers, with letters of other authors, were used by counsel before the House of Lords on May 13. *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, pp. 274, 278, 284.

<sup>2</sup> Hume wrote to Strahan:—'I have writ you an ostensible Letter

The

The Author has a natural and peculiar right to the profits of his own work<sup>1</sup>.

But as every Man who claims the protection of Society, must on the subject of literary Property, which contains my real Sentiments, so far as it goes. However, I shall tell you the truth; I do not foresee any such bad Consequences as you mention from laying the Property open. The Italians and French have more pompous Editions of their Classics since the Expiration of the Privileges than any we have of ours: And at least every Bookseller who prints a Book will endeavour to make it as compleat and correct as he can.' *Letters of Hume*, p. 274.

The following is an abridgement of my notes on this letter:—"On Feb. 22, 1774, a decision was given in the House of Lords on the question of literary property or copyright, by which, to use the words of the *Annual Register* (XVII. i. 95), "Near £200,000 worth of what was honestly purchased at public sale, and which was yesterday thought property, is now reduced to nothing. The English booksellers have now no other security in future for any literary purchases they may make but the statute of the 8th of Queen Anne, which secures to the author's assigns an exclusive property for 14 years, to revert again to the author, and vest in him for 14 years more." The works of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Bunyan, Locke, had hitherto been copyright. Boswell, under date of July 20, 1763, tells how Donaldson, an Edinburgh bookseller, 'had for some years opened a shop in London, and sold his cheap editions of the most popular English books, in defiance of the supposed common-law right of Literary Property.' *Life*, i. 437. The booksellers got a verdict against him in 1769 in the Court of King's Bench,

but the judgement, upon an appeal from a decree of the Court of Chancery founded on it, was reversed by the House of Lords on Feb. 22, 1774. A copyright Bill in protection of the booksellers was the same session carried through the House of Commons, but it was lost in the House of Lords. The London booksellers protected themselves by an 'honorary copyright, which,' wrote Boswell in 1791, 'is still preserved among them by mutual compact.' *ib.* iii. 370. See also *ib.* i. 437; ii. 272.

<sup>1</sup> 'There is (writes Blackstone) still another species of property, which (if it subsists) being grounded on labour and invention, is more properly reducible to the head of occupancy than any other.' *Commentaries*, ed. 1775, ii. 405. It is this view which Johnson attacked when he said:—"There seems to be in authours a stronger right of property than that by occupancy; a metaphysical right, a right, as it were, of creation, which should from its nature be perpetual; but the consent of nations is against it, and indeed reason and the interests of learning are against it," &c. *Life*, ii. 259. Lord Camden attacked 'the metaphysical refinements' which were brought into the arguments. Metaphysics 'lent its artful aid' to both sides. 'It has,' said Mr. Justice Aston, 'been ingeniously, metaphysically, and subtilly argued on the part of the defendant, "That there is a want of property in the thing itself."' *Letters of Hume*, p. 279. Blackstone says that 'it is urged that the right is of too subtle and unsubstantial a nature to become the subject of property at the common law.' See also *ante*, i. 382 n.; ii. 437 n.

purchase

purchase it by resigning some part of his natural right<sup>1</sup>, the authour must recede from so much of his claim as shall be deemed injurious or inconvenient to Society.

It is inconvenient to Society that an useful book should become perpetual and exclusive property.

The Judgement of the Lords was therefore legally and politically right.

But the authours enjoyment of his natural right might without any inconvenience be protracted beyond the term settled by the Statute. And it is, I think, to be desired

1. That an Authour should retain during his life the sole right of printing and selling his work.

This is agreeable to moral right, and not inconvenient to the publick, for who will be so diligent as the authour to improve the book, and who can know so well how to improve it?

2. That the authour be allowed, as by the present act, to alienate his right only for fourteen years.

A shorter time would not procure a sufficient price, and a longer would cut off all hope of future profit, and consequently all solicitude for correction or addition.

3. That when after fourteen years the copy shall revert to the authour, he be allowed to alienate it again only for seven years at a time.

After fourteen years the value of the work will be known, and it will be no longer bought at hazard. Seven years of possession will therefore have an assignable price. It is proper that the authour be always incited to polish and improve his work, by that prospect of accruing interest which those shorter periods of alienation will afford.

4. That after the authours death his work should continue an exclusive property capable of bequest and inheritance, and of conveyance by gift or sale for thirty years.

By these regulations a book may continue the property of

<sup>1</sup> 'A man (said Johnson) is bound to submit to the inconveniences of society as he enjoys the good.' *Life*, v. 87.

'Every man, when he enters into

society, gives up a part of his natural liberty, as the price of so valuable a purchase.' Blackstone's *Commentaries*, ed. 1775, i. 125.

the authour, or of those who claim from him, about fifty years, a term sufficient to reward the writer without any loss to the publick. In fifty years far the greater number of books are forgotten and annihilated, and it is for the advantage of learning that those which fifty years have not destroyed should become bona communia, to be used by every Scholar as he shall think best<sup>1</sup>.

In fifty years every book begins to require notes either to explain forgotten allusions and obsolete words; or to subjoin those discoveries which have been made by the gradual advancement of knowledge; or to correct those mistakes which time may have discovered<sup>1</sup>.

Such Notes cannot be written to any useful purpose without

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, arguing this question in 1763, was for granting authors a hundred years of exclusive right. *Life*, i. 439. In 1773 he said:— 'The consent of nations is against it [a perpetual copyright], and indeed reason and the interests of learning are against it; for were it to be perpetual, no book, however useful, could be universally diffused amongst mankind, should the proprietor take it into his head to restrain its circulation. No book could have the advantage of being edited with notes, however necessary to its elucidation, should the proprietor perversely oppose it. For the general good of the world, therefore, whatever valuable work has once been created by an authour, and issued out by him, should be understood as no longer in his power, but as belonging to the publick; at the same time the authour is entitled to an adequate reward. This he should have by an exclusive right to his work for a considerable number of years.' *Life*, ii. 259.

By the present law copyright lasts for the life of the author and seven years afterwards, or for forty-two years, whichever is the longer period.

Carlyle in his petition to the House of Commons asked for sixty years. 'After sixty years, unless your Honourable House provide otherwise, they [extraneous persons] may begin to steal.' Miss Martineau's *Thirty Years' Peace*, ed. 1850, ii. 547.

Macaulay, opposing this period, said:— 'Dr. Johnson died fifty-six years ago. If the law were what my honourable and learned friend wishes to make it, somebody would now have the monopoly of Dr. Johnson's works. Who that somebody would be it is impossible to say; but we may venture to guess. I guess then that it would have been some bookseller, who was the assign of another bookseller, who was the grandson of a third bookseller, who had bought the copyright from Black Frank, the doctor's servant and residuary legatee, in 1785 or 1786.' Macaulay's *Misc. Writings*, ed. 1871, p. 612.

<sup>1</sup> 'Johnson talked with approbation of an intended edition of *The Spectator*, with notes. . . . He observed that all works which describe manners require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less.' *Life*, ii. 211.

the



the text, and the text will frequently be refused while it is any man's property.

I am,

Sir,

Your humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

March 7, 1774.

TO JAMES MACPHERSON<sup>1</sup>.

MR. JAMES MACPHERSON,—I received your foolish and impudent note. Whatever insult is offered me I will do my best to repel, and what I cannot do for myself the law will do for me. I will not desist from detecting what I think a cheat from any fear of the menaces of a Ruffian.

You want me to retract. What shall I retract? I thought your book an imposture from the beginning, I think it upon yet surer reasons an imposture still. For this opinion I give the publick my reasons which I here dare you to refute.

But however I may despise you, I reverence truth, and if you can prove the genuineness of the work I will confess it. Your rage I defy, your abilities since your Homer are not so formidable, and what I have heard of your morals disposes me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but what you can prove.

You may print this if you will.

SAM: JOHNSON.

Jan. 20, 1775.

To Mr. James Macpherson.

<sup>1</sup> This copy of Johnson's letter to Macpherson I owe to the kindness of Mrs. Archer-Hind of Little Newnham, Cambridge, who possesses a tracing of the original made by her father, the late Mr. Lewis Pocock. At the sale of Mr. Pocock's autographs, on May 10, 1875, the original fetched £50. *Letters*, i. 307.

The copy printed in the *Life*, ii. 298, was dictated to Boswell by Johnson from memory. It runs as follows :—

'MR. JAMES MACPHERSON,

'I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I never shall be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

'What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons

To

DEAR SIR,

To —<sup>1</sup>.

On Monday I purpose to be at Oxford, where I shall perhaps stay a week, from whence I shall come to Birmingham, and so to Lichfield. At Lichfield my purpose is to pass a week or so, but whether I shall stay there in my way to Ashbourne, or in [returning] from it, you may, if you please, determine. When I come thither I will write to you or perhaps I may find a letter at Mrs. Porter's.

I am,

Sir,

Your affectionate servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

May 27, 1775

DEAR SIR,

TO THE REV. DR. TAYLOR<sup>2</sup>.

I was sorry, and so was Mr. Boswel<sup>3</sup>, that we were summoned away so soon<sup>4</sup>. Our effort of travelling in the Evening was useless. We did not get home till Friday morning. Mrs. Thrale and her girl are gone to Bath<sup>5</sup>. The blow was very heavy upon them.

The Expedition however still proceeds<sup>6</sup>, so that I shall be but a short time here. If Mr. Langdon will be so kind as to send

to the publick, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard, not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

SAM. JOHNSON.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Buffalo Library.

For his trip to the Midland Counties this summer, see *Letters*, i. 323-365.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam of Buffalo. This letter was sold by auction for

£6 15s. on April 8, 1891. *Letters*, i. 387.

<sup>3</sup> In the Preface to the *Letters of Johnson* (p. 15) I have pointed out that Johnson always wrote his friend's name Boswel. Boswell's father followed this spelling, as was shown when the Auchinleck Library was dispersed. In many of the books was inscribed Alex. Boswel.

<sup>4</sup> They were summoned to London on the sudden death of Mr. Thrale's son. *Life*, ii. 468; iii. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, ii. 295; *Life*, iii. 6.

<sup>6</sup> To Italy. *Life*, iii. 6. It was given up a few days later. *Ib.* iii. 27. *Ante*, i. 263.

the

the barley 'next week, I can deliver [it] to Boswel. I wish he would [put] a peck more in a separate bag, for I would not break the main bulk, and yet I cannot well help it, unless I have a little more.

Mr. Boswel is in the room<sup>2</sup>, and sends his respects. Let me know whether you design to come hither before I am to go, and if you come we will contrive to pass a few hours together.

I am,

Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

No. 8, Bolt Court, Fleet street (not Johnson's Court<sup>3</sup>).

Apr. 4, 1776.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor, in Ashbourn, Derbyshire.

TO MISS REYNOLDS<sup>4</sup>.

DEAREST MADAM,

When you called on Mrs. Thrale, I find by enquiry that she was really abroad, the same thing happened [*sic*] to Mrs. Montague, of which I beg you to inform her, for she went likewise by my opinion. The Denial, if it had been feigned, would not have pleased me. Your visits however are kindly paid and very kindly taken<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Langdon is mentioned the following year as buying 'fifteen tun of cheese at Nottinghamfair.' *Letters*, ii. 45. Johnson wrote from Ashbourne in July, 1775:—'We talk here of Polish oats and Siberian barley... I intend to procure specimens of both, which we will try in some spots of our own ground.' *Ib.* i. 352.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> He had lately removed from Johnson's Court. *Ib.* ii. 427.

<sup>4</sup> From the original in the possession of Lady Colomb. The first paragraph has been long in print. *Letters*, i. 391.

Johnson's letter to Miss Rey-

nolds of Oct. 27, 1763 (*Ib.* i. 110), as printed by Croker, ends:—'Most sincerely yours.' I suspected the word *sincerely* for I had never known it thus used by Johnson. By Lady Colomb's kindness I have seen the original. The word is not clear, but I believe it is *zealously*.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Thrale had lost her only son eleven days earlier. Johnson wrote to Miss Reynolds on the 11th:—'A visit from you will be well taken.... I am sure that it will be thought seasonable and kind, and I wish you not to omit it.' *Ib.* i. 389.

Pray

Pray tell Sir Joshua that I have examined Mr. Thrale's Man<sup>1</sup>, and find no foundation for the story of the Alehouse and mulled Beer. He was at the play two nights before, with one of the chief men in the Brewhouse, and came home at the regular time. This, I believe, is true, for Mrs. Thrale told me that she had sent him to his friend Murphy's play<sup>2</sup>, and if there had been [anything] to be told, I should then have heard it.

We are going to Bath this morning, but I could not part without telling you the real state of your visit.

I am,

dearest Madam,

Your most humble Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Apr. 15, 1776.

TO MISS REYNOLDS<sup>3</sup>.

MY DEAREST DEAR,

When I am grown better, which is, I hope, at no great distance, for I mend gradually, we will make a little time to ourselves, and look over your dear little production, and try

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Greaves, who after Mr. Thrale's death kept the Essex Head, where Johnson's last club met. *Life*, iv. 253; *ante*, i. 110 n.

<sup>2</sup> Murphy's *Three Weeks after Marriage*, which under the title of *What we must all come to* had been hissed off the stage in 1764, was revived on March 30, 1776, and was successful. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

<sup>3</sup> From a copy of the original in the possession of Lady Colomb.

Mr. Johnson was recovering from the gout. On June 3 he wrote:—'I receive ladies and dismiss them sitting.—*Painful pre-eminence.*' *Letters*, i. 403.

He more than once corrected Miss Reynolds's productions. *Ante*, ii.

279 n. In his letter to her of April 8, 1782, as printed in the *Letters*, ii. 249, from Croker's *Boswell*, is the following passage:—

'Your system of the mental fabric is exceedingly obscure, and without more attention than will be willingly bestowed is unintelligible. The plans of Burnaby will be more safely understood, and are often charming. I was delighted with the different bounty of different ages.'

In the copy of the original sent me by Lady Colomb the last paragraph runs:—'The Ideas of Beauty will be more easily understood, and are often charming. I am delighted with the different beauty of different ages.'

to make it such as we may both like. I will not forget it, nor neglect it, for I love your tenderness.

I am,

Dear Madam,

Your most humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

June 15, 1776.

TO MISS REYNOLDS<sup>1</sup>.

DEAR MADAM,

I want no company but yours nor wish for any other. I will wait on you on Saturday, and am so well that I am very able to find my way without a carriage.

I am,

Dear Madam,

Your most humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Oct. 21 [1779].

TO [LUCY PORTER<sup>2</sup>].

DEAR MADAM,

I have inclosed Mr. Boswels answer.

I still continue better than when you saw me, but am not just at this time very well, but hope to mend again. Publick affairs remain as they were. Do not let the papers fright you<sup>3</sup>.

I have ordered you some oysters this week, which I hope you

<sup>1</sup> From a copy of the original in the possession of Lady Colomb.

On Oct. 25 Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'On Saturday I walked to Dover-street [Miss Reynolds's lodging] and back. . . I am to dine with Renny [Miss Reynolds] to-morrow.' *Letters*, ii. 113. On Oct. 28 he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'I dined on Tuesday with —, and hope her little head begins to settle. She has, however, some scruples about the company of a lady whom she has lately known. I pacified

her as well as I could.' *Ib.* ii. 116. Tuesday was the 26th; so that it was Miss Reynolds's little head which was beginning to settle.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson & Co., 5 Pall Mall Place, London. Part of this letter is given in the *Letters*, ii. 129. It is not addressed, but it was written to Johnson's step-daughter, Lucy Porter. See *ib.* n. 1 and *Life*, iii. 417.

<sup>3</sup> There was fear of an invasion. *Ante*, i. 203; *Letters*, ii. 109, 120.

will

will get, though your oysters have sometimes miscarried<sup>1</sup>. Write when you can.

I am,

My dear,

Your humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Dec. 2, 1779.

TO [THE REV. — ALLEN<sup>2</sup>].

SIR,

[1780.]

Mr. William Shaw, the gentleman from whom you will receive this, is a studious and literary man; he is a stranger, and will be glad to be introduced into proper company; and he is my friend, and any civility you shall shew him will be an obligation on,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

TO MISS THRALE<sup>3</sup>.

DEAREST LOVE,

[Winter of 1782-3.]

I am engaged to dinner to morrow, of which I forgot

<sup>1</sup> Johnson sent her oysters the following spring. *Letters*, ii. 134.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam of Buffalo. First published in *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr. Johnson*, 1785, p. 156, where it is stated that 'upon Mr. Shaw's going to settle in Kent in 1780 as a curate, the Doctor wrote this letter to Mr. Allen, the Vicar of St. Nicholas, Rochester, in his favour.' Mr. Shaw published a *Gaelick Grammar and Dictionary*. He also published two pamphlets on the Ossian controversy. See Lowndes's *Bibl. Man.* ed. 1871, p. 1738.

In 1777 Johnson tried to get him appointed chaplain 'to one of the new-raised regiments.' *Life*, iii. 214; iv. 252.

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam of Buffalo. It was sold by auction on Feb. 28, 1893, for £3 5s.

Johnson wrote to Boswell on Dec. 7, 1782:—'Mrs. Thrale and the three Misses are now for the winter in Argyll-street.' *Ib.* iv. 157. Boswell found him there in March, 1783. *Ib.* p. 164. Miss Thrale was Johnson's *Queeney*. *Ib.* iii. 422. She married Admiral Viscount Keith. *Letters*, i. 133, n. 1. On Nov. 12, 1781, Johnson wrote to her mother:—'I have a mind to look on Queeney as my own dear girl.' *Ib.* ii. 234. He sometimes complains of her neglect. He wrote, during an illness, on Dec. 20, 1782:—'Queeney never sent me a kind word.' *Ib.* ii. 279; on July 5, 1783:—'I think Queeney's

to tell you, but I hope you will favour me with a call early on Wednesday.

I am, dearest,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Monday, 17th.

To Miss Thrale, No. 37, Argyle Street.

Monday, nine in the morning.

TO DR. TAYLOR<sup>1</sup>.

DEAR SIR,

I am sorry to hear that you are not well. I have had a very troublesome night myself. I fancy the Weather may hurt us, if that is the case, we may hope for better health as the year advances.

I had a letter last night from Mr. Langley<sup>2</sup>, which I will shew you to morrow; which will I believe incline you to doubt Mr. Flint's veracity<sup>3</sup>, yet I believe it will be best for the Girls to take the money offered them, but you shall consider it to morrow.

I am,

Sir,

Your, &c.

SAM: JOHNSON.

I shall come to morrow early in the evening.

March 2, 1782.

To the Reverend Doctor Taylor.

Endorsed in another hand, 2 March, 1782.

silence has something either of laziness or unkindness.' *Letters*, ii. 316; on March 16, 1784, 'Miss Thrale rather neglects me.' *Ib.* ii. 384; on June 26, 1784:—'My dear girls seem all to forget me.' *Ib.* ii. 404. They had troubles of their own with their mother's second marriage. Queeney visited him in his last illness. *Life*, iv. 339, *n.* 3.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of Mr. S. J. Davey, 47 Great

Russell Street, London.

<sup>2</sup> The head master of Ashbourne Grammar School. *Ib.* iii. 138.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Flint had married a widow, Mrs. Collier, who had brought him, Johnson thought, about £200 a year. She was dead, and he apparently was trying to keep from her daughters by her first husband a part of her property which they claimed. See *Letters*, ii. 263, 269, 270, 278, 280, 282.

To

SIR, TO THE REV. JAMES COMPTON<sup>1</sup>.

Your business, I suppose, is in a way of as easy progress as such business ever has. It is seldom that event keeps pace with expectation.

The scheme of your book I cannot say that I fully comprehend. I would not have you ask less than an hundred guineas, for it seems a large octavo. Go to Mr. Davies in Russel Street<sup>2</sup>, shew him this letter, and shew him the book if he desires to see it. He will tell you what hopes you may form, and to what Book-seller you should apply.

If you succeed in selling your book, you may do better than by dedicating it to me. You may perhaps obtain permission to dedicate it to the Bishop of London, or to Dr. Vyse<sup>3</sup>, and make way by your book to more advantage than I can procure you.

Please to tell Mrs. Williams that I grow better, and that I wish to know how she goes on. You, Sir, may write for her to,

Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Oct. 24, 1782.

To the Reverend Mr. Compton. To be sent to Mrs. Williams.

TO MISS REYNOLDS<sup>4</sup>.

DEAR MADAM,

Instead of having me at your table, which cannot, I fear,

<sup>1</sup> From the facsimile in *Scribner's Magazine*, September, 1894, p. 344; published also in *Underbrush* by James T. Fields, Boston, 5th ed., p. 17.

Mr. Fields found this letter in a copy of *Rasselas* purchased at a second-hand bookshop.

For an account of Compton, whom Johnson had known in Paris as a Benedictine monk, see *Letters*, ii. 271, 290.

His book, it seems, was never published. There is no mention of it in the Catalogue of the British Museum, or of him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, i. 427; ii. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Rector of Lambeth. *Letters*, ii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> From the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson & Co., 5 Pall Mall Place, London.

quickly



quickly happen, come, if you can, to dine this day with me. It will give pleasure to a sick friend<sup>1</sup>.

I am,

Madam,

Yours affectionately,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Oct. 23, 1783.

To Mrs. Reynolds<sup>2</sup>.

TO MR. SASTRES<sup>3</sup>.

SIR,

I am very much displeased with myself for my negligence on Monday. I had totally forgotten my engagement to you and Mr. —, for which I desire you to make my apologies to Mr. —, and tell him that if he will give me leave to repay his visit, I will take the first opportunity of waiting on him.

I am,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

April 25, [1784.]

April 26, Evening.

To Mr. Sastres, at Mr. — Bookseller in Mortimer Street<sup>4</sup>, Oxford Road.

TO GRIFFITH JONES<sup>5</sup>.

SIR,

You are accustomed to consider Advertisements, and to observe what stile has most effect upon the Publick. I shall

<sup>1</sup> He had written to her on Oct. 1 :—'I am very ill indeed. . . . To my other afflictions is added solitude.' *Letters*, ii. 337. On the 27th he wrote to Mrs. Thrale :—'I have now neither pain nor sickness. . . . But I am very solitary.' *Ib.* p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Reynolds, who was fifty-four years old, in accordance with the common custom, was now dignified as Mrs. Reynolds. *Ib.* i. 367, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> From a copy of the original in the possession of Mr. Thacher of

Albany, New York, forwarded to me by Professor Lounsbury of Yale, who informs me that the blanks in the letter stand for a name that has been most carefully obliterated.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson wrote to Sastres on August 21, 1784 :—'I am glad that a letter has at last reached you; what became of the two former, which were directed to *Mortimer* instead of *Margaret-street*, I have no means of knowing.' *Ib.* ii. 414.

<sup>5</sup> From the *European Magazine* for September, 1798, p. 163.

think

think it a favour if you will be pleased to take the trouble of digging twelve lines of common sense out of this strange scribble, and insert it three times in *The Daily Advertiser*, at the expence of,

Sir,

Your humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Oct. 9.

Please to return me the paper.

TO MISS REYNOLDS,

Enclosing a letter to be sent in her name to Sir Joshua Reynolds<sup>1</sup>.

DEAR BROTHER,

[Undated.]

I know that complainers are never welcome yet you must allow me to complain of your unkindness, because it lies heavy

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of Lady Colomb.

Miss Reynolds for many years kept house for her brother. Northcote, in 1771, writing to his brother during Reynolds's absence from home, says:—'He never writes to her, and, between ourselves, I believe but seldom converses as we used to do in our family. I found she knew nothing of his having invited me to be his scholar and live in the house till I told her of it. She has the command of the household and the servants as much as he has.' He knew that Johnson had written a letter in her name, which, he said, must have been detected from the diction. It began:—'I am well aware that complaints are always odious, but complain I must.' As it is unlikely that Johnson wrote two letters Northcote's memory was too weak or his imagination too strong to give a correct report.

Her character was the opposite of her brother's. Mme. D'Arblay describes her as 'living in an habitual

perplexity of mind and irresolution of conduct, which to herself was restlessly tormenting, and to all around her was teasingly wearisome.' She describes 'her excessive oddness and absurdity.' After leaving her brother's house she returned to Devonshire. 'In a rough draft of one of her letters she says:—"The height of my desire is to be able to spend a few months in the year near the arts and sciences, but if you think that it will rather bring my character in question, for my brother to be in London, and I not at his house, I will content myself with residing at Windsor."' In the end she lodged with Hoole, the translator of Ariosto. Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 203; Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 91, 416; Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 219.

Reynolds seems to have had but little sympathy with his sisters. Lady Colomb has the original of the following letter written to him by one of them:—

'Thy soul is a shocking spectacle of poverty. When thy outside is, as

at

at my heart and because I am not conscious that I ever deserved it. I have not perhaps been always careful enough to please but you can charge me, and I can charge myself with no offence which a Brother may not forgive.

If you ask me what I suffer from you, I can answer that I suffer too much in the loss of your notice; but to that is added the neglect of the world which is the consequence of yours.

If you ask what will satisfy me, I shall be satisfied with such a degree of attention when I visit you, as may set me above the contempt of your servants, with your calling now and then at my lodgings and with your inviting me from time to time with such parties as I may properly appear in. This is not much for a sister who has at least done you no harm, and this I hope you will promise by your answer to this letter; for a refusal will give me more pain than you can desire or intend to inflict.

I am, &c.

DEAR MADAM,

This is my letter, which at least I like better than yours. But take your choice, and if you like mine alter any thing that you think not ladylike. I shall call at about one.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS TO MISS REYNOLDS<sup>1</sup>.

Richmond<sup>2</sup>.

DEAR SISTER,

I am very much obliged to you for your kind and generous

thy inside now is, as I told thee ten year since I will not shut the door against thee. But it may be, thy soul is past all recovery. If so, I shall never see thee more. Thy vissitation is not yet come: and who knows in what shape it will come: or whether it will come at all. Wo be to thee if it does not come.

From thy best friend

ELIZ. JOHNSON.

Nov. 8th, 1776.'

She declined his offer to receive into his house one of her sons 'who had shown some talent in drawing.' Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 461.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of Lady Colomb. This letter is endorsed by Miss Reynolds:—'I believe in '81.'

<sup>2</sup> On Aug. 25, 1780, Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'I have not dined out for some time but with Renny [Miss Reynolds] or Sir Joshua; and next week Sir Joshua goes to Devonshire, and Renny to Richmond, and I am left by myself.' *Letters*, ii. 201. 'Sir Joshua's house is delightfully situated, almost at the top of Richmond Hill.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 143.

offer

offer in regard to the house at Richmond, not only in giving me leave to use it occasionally but even as long as I live, provided I will give it to you, but as I have no such thought at present I can only thank you for your kindness. Tho I am much older than you I hope I am not yet arrived to dotage as you seem to think I am, voluntarily to put myself in the situation of receiving the favour of living in my own house instead of conferring the favour of letting you live in it.

I am your most affectionate Brother,  
J. REYNOLDS.

I have enclosed a Bank Bill of ten Pounds<sup>1</sup>.

FROM JAMES BOSWELL TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS<sup>2</sup>.

Edinburgh, 6 February, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

I long exceedingly to hear from you. Sir William Forbes<sup>3</sup> brought me good accounts of you, and Mr. Temple<sup>4</sup> sent me very pleasing intelligence concerning the fair Palmeria<sup>5</sup>. But a line or two from yourself is the next thing to seeing you.

My anxiety about Dr. Johnson is truly great. I had a letter<sup>6</sup> from him within these six weeks, written with his usual acuteness and vigour of mind. But he complained sadly of the state of his health; and I have been informed since, that he is worse. I intend to be in London next month, chiefly to attend upon him with respectful affection. But in the mean time, it will be a great favour done me, if you who know him so well, will be kind enough to let me know particularly how he is<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'In a rough draft of one of her letters she adverts to the income allowed her by her brother, as sufficient to keep her within the sphere of gentility, "without pecuniary schemes to raise it higher." He left her £2,500 in the Funds for life; to his niece Mrs. Gwatkin he left four times as much absolutely, while Miss Palmer inherited nearly £100,000. Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 92; ii. 635.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of Lady Colomb.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, ii. 195; *Life*, v. 24.

<sup>4</sup> The grandfather of the Archbishop of Canterbury. *Life*, i. 436.

<sup>5</sup> Probably Sir Joshua's niece Mary Palmer.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* iv. 248.

<sup>7</sup> Johnson wrote to Boswell on Feb. 11:—'I hear of many enquiries which your kindness has disposed you to make after me.' *Ib.* iv. 259.

I hope

I hope Mr. Dilly conveyed to you my Letter on the State of the Nation <sup>1</sup> *from the Author*. I know your political principles, and indeed your settled system of thinking upon civil society and subordination, to be according to my own heart. And therefore I doubt not you will approve of my honest zeal. But what monstrous effects of Party do we now see! I am really vexed at the conduct of some of our friends <sup>2</sup>.

Amidst the conflict, our friend of Port Elliot is with much propriety created a Peer <sup>3</sup>. But why o why did he not obtain the title of Baron *Mahogany* <sup>4</sup>? Genealogists and Heralds would have had curious work of it to explain and illustrate that title.

I ever am with sincere regard,

My Dear Sir,

Your affectionate

humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iv. 258, 260-1.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson wrote to Boswell on Feb. 27:—‘I am very much of your opinion, and, like you, feel great indignation at the indecency with which the King is every day treated.’ *Ib.* iv. 261.

The struggle between the late Coalition Ministry and the King and Pitt was still going on. Among those whom Boswell calls ‘our friends’ was Burke.

<sup>3</sup> He had been raised to the peerage, under the title of Baron Eliot of St. Germans, in a time of great dishonour. ‘Pitt’s cousin, Earl Temple, had been in the royal closet, and had there been authorised to let it be known that His Majesty would consider all who voted for the bill [Fox’s India bill] as his enemies. The ignominious commission was performed; and instantly a troop of Lords of the Bedchamber, of Bishops who wished to be translated,

and of Scotch peers who wished to be re-elected made haste to change sides.’ Macaulay’s *Misc. Writings*, ed. 1871, p. 407. On Dec. 30, 1783, Horace Walpole wrote (*Letters*, viii. 447):—‘They are crying Peerages about the streets in barrows, and can get none off.’ At the general election of 1780 Eliot had been opposed to the King’s party. Gibbon, who lost his seat, writes:—‘Mr. Elliot was now deeply engaged in the measures of opposition, and the electors of Liskeard are commonly of the same opinion as Mr. Elliot.’ Gibbon’s *Misc. Works*, v. 238.

<sup>4</sup> At a dinner at Sir Joshua Reynolds’, in 1781, ‘Mr. Eliot mentioned a curious liquor peculiar to his country, which the Cornish fishermen drink. They call it *Mahogany*; and it is made of two parts gin, and one part treacle, well beaten together.’ *Life*, iv. 78.

JAMES

MY LORD, JAMES BOSWELL TO LORD THURLOW<sup>1</sup>.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, though wonderfully recovered from a complication of dangerous illness, is by no means well, and I have reason to think that his valuable life cannot be preserved long, without the benignant influence of a southern climate.

It would therefore be of very great moment were he to go to Italy before Winter sets in; and I know he wishes it much. But the objection is that his pension of £300 a year would not be sufficient to defray his expence, and make it convenient for Mr. Sastres, an ingenious and worthy native of that country, and a teacher of Italian here, to accompany him<sup>2</sup>.

As I am well assured of your Lordship's regard for Dr. Johnson I presume, without his knowledge, so far to indulge my anxious concern for him, as to intrude upon your Lordship with this suggestion, being persuaded that if a representation of the matter were to be made to his Majesty by proper authority the Royal Bounty would be extended in a suitable manner.

Your Lordship I cannot doubt, will forgive me for taking this liberty. I even flatter myself you will approve of it. I am to set out for Scotland on Monday morning; so that if your Lordship should have any commands for me, as to this pious negotiation, you will be pleased to send them before that time. But Sir Joshua Reynolds, with whom I have consulted, will be here, and will gladly give all attention to it.

I am with very great respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient

and most humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

General Paoli's, Upper Seymour Street, Portman Square<sup>3</sup>.

24 June, 1784.

<sup>1</sup> From the copy in Boswell's handwriting of the original. This copy Boswell, no doubt, had given to Reynolds, when, on setting out for Scotland, he left the management of the 'pious negotiation' described in the letter in Sir Joshua's hands. *Life*, iv. 326, 339. For Thurlow's answer

see *ib.* p. 336; *ante*, i. 441. For this interesting letter I am indebted to Lady Colomb.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Life* there is no mention of Sastres as his companion, though his going explains why a larger sum was required.

<sup>3</sup> 'I was (writes Boswell) enter-SIR

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS TO JAMES BOSWELL<sup>1</sup>.

Wednesday.

This being St. Luke's day, the Company of Painters dine in their Hall in the City, to which I am invited and desired to bring any friend with me.

As you love to see life in all its modes if you have a mind to go I will can [*sic*] you about two o'clock, the black-guards dine at half an hour after<sup>2</sup>.

Yours,

J. REYNOLDS.

James Boswell, Esq.

DR. ADAMS TO DR. SCOTT<sup>3</sup>.

Oxford, Feb. 8, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

We have received a most agreeable Token of our Friend Dr. Johnson's Regard for his College in a Present of his Books and of his Publications of every kind which he sent us a little before his death<sup>4</sup>. Mr. Sergrove informs me that there are some literary Anecdotes found among his Papers which you have had the Kind Thought of depositing likewise in our Library<sup>5</sup>. These

tained with the kindest attention as General Paoli's constant guest while I was in London, till I had a house of my own there.' *Life*, iii. 35.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of Lady Colomb.

<sup>2</sup> 'Mr. Camden, the famous antiquarian, whose father was a painter in the Old Bailey, gave the Painter Stainers' Company a silver cup and cover, which they use every St. Luke's day at their election; the old Master drinking to the one then elected out of it.' Dodsley's *London*, 1761, v. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Reynolds at home always 'dined at five o'clock precisely.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, ii. 95. His strong language is perhaps due to his vexa-

tion at losing two or three hours of his working-day; 'none of his hours were ever spent in idleness, or lost in dissipation.' *Ib.* i. 119.

<sup>4</sup> From the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam.

Dr. Adams was the Master of Pembroke College; Dr. Scott (afterwards Lord Stowell) was one of the executors of Johnson's will. *Life*, iv. 402, *n.* 2.

<sup>5</sup> According to Dr. Hall, who was elected Master in 1809, the College did not receive all his works. *Ib.* i. 74, *n.* 3.

<sup>6</sup> In the Library there are many of Johnson's manuscripts, but no literary anecdotes.

will

will be most thankfully accepted under any conditions that you are pleased to prescribe. They shall be preserved among the few MSS. and rarer Books which are locked up from view and will greatly enrich this collection. He tells me also that he apprized you of a sort of promise which he thought the Doctor had made us of his Picture. But this is more than we have a right to say. We had indeed formed to ourselves an expectation of this kind which was grounded wholly on the following incident. The Doctor found in my Parlour some time ago a Print of himself which belonged to our Common Room: under which I had just then caused to be written a Line of his Favourite Miss Hannah More, 'And is not Johnson ours himself an Host'; with which he seemed well pleased. This gave occasion to my Daughter to whom he was always very partial<sup>2</sup> to say [piece torn off] to have his Picture in the Hall, and to hope that he would oblige us with it. His answer was that he had no Right to be placed among the Founders and Benefactors of the College in the Hall; that the most he could aspire to would be a Place in the Lodgings, if the Master could find Room for his Picture there. This we were willing to construe as an intention to comply with our Wishes and flattered ourselves accordingly. Should his Executors incline to put the same construction upon this, and have it in their power to fulfill this intention, they would confer the highest obligation upon us. It would indeed be a singular pleasure and matter of useful Reflection to have his Portrait always before us as the Memorial of one who excelled in every Virtue and was so great an Ornament to the College<sup>3</sup>. The Doctor's last visit was I believe to this College.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, ii. 199.

<sup>2</sup> 'She happened to tell him that a little coffee-pot, in which she had made his coffee, was the only thing she could call her own. He turned to her with a complacent gallantry:—"Don't say so, my dear: I hope you don't reckon my heart as nothing."' *Life*, iv. 292.

<sup>3</sup> His portrait by Reynolds, the gift of the late Mr. Andrew Spottis-

woode, hangs in the Common Room. A copy of the portrait of him by Reynolds in the National Gallery, taken by Miss Leveson, the daughter of the Scribe of the Johnson Club, and given by her to the College, hangs in the hall. There also is to be seen a copy of a portrait of Dr. Adams; it is to be hoped that some day it will be replaced by the original picture.

We



We had much serious Talk together during the few days that he staid with me: for which I ought to be the better as long as I live<sup>1</sup>. He took a most affecting Leave of me, still saying that he would come again soon.

I am, dear sir, with the most perfect Esteem,

Your affectionate

and obedient Servant,

W. ADAMS.

To Dr. Scott at Doctors Commons.

<sup>1</sup> He used the same words in a letter to Boswell written a few days later. *Life*, iv. 376.

## ADDENDA



## ADDENDA

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(*Vol. i. 285.*)

For a criticism, most likely by Malone, of Mrs. Piozzi's anecdote of the dinner at a nobleman's house, see *Life*, iv. 343.

(*Vol. i. 327.*)

Swift's hatred of the world and love of certain individuals, to which Johnson refers, was expressed in a letter to Pope, dated September 29, 1725, in which he says: 'I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities; and all my love is towards individuals; for instance, I hate the tribe of lawyers, but I love Counsellor such a one and Judge such a one. It is so with physicians (I will not speak of my own trade), soldiers, English, Scotch, French, and the rest. But principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth.' Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xvii. 211.

(*Vol. i. 342.*)

Mr. R. B. Adam, of Buffalo, has in his collection three impressions of J. Heath's engraving of the first portrait of Johnson painted by Reynolds. 'I found,' writes Boswell, 'that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work.' *Life*, i. 392. See also *ib.* iv. 422 n.

The last of the three impressions is of the engraving as it was published. On the margins of the first and second are the following inscriptions in Boswell's handwriting:—

VOL. II.

H h

## I.

'This is the first impression of the Plate after Mr. Heath the Engraver thought it was finished. He went with me to Sir Joshua Reynolds's, who suggested that the countenance was too young and not thoughtful enough. Mr. Heath therefore altered it so much to its advantage that Sir Joshua was quite satisfied, and Heath then saw such a difference that he said he would not for a thousand pounds have had it remain as it was.'

## II.

'Second Impression of Dr. Johnson's Portrait after the Plate had been improved by Sir Joshua Reynolds's suggestions. Mr. Heath afterwards gave it a few additional touches.'

Among other treasures Mr. Adam has a copy of the fifth edition of Goldsmith's *Traveller*, with the following inscription on the title-page in Boswell's handwriting:—

'In Spring 1773 Dr. Johnson at my desire marked with a pencil the lines in this admirable poem which he furnished, viz. l. 18 on p. 23, and from the 3 line on the last page to the end except the last couplet but one. These (he said) are all of which I can be sure.' See *Life*, ii. 6; *ante*, ii. 223.

(*Vol. i. 419, n. 2.*)

The contempt which Johnson showed for George III's mental power was expressed also by him at Edinburgh, if we could trust the following passage in *The Jacobite Lairds of Gask*, by J. L. Kington Oliphant, 1870, p. 377<sup>1</sup>: 'Bishop Forbes, nonjuror rogue, is writing, "You know the famous Dr. Johnson has been among us; several anecdotes could I give you of him, but one is most singular. Dining one day at the table of one of the Lords of Session, the company stumbled upon characters, particularly, it would appear, of kings. 'Well, well,' said the bluff Doctor, 'George the First was a robber, George the Second a fool, and George the Third is an idiot.' How the company stared I leave you to judge; it was far from being polite, especially considering the table at which he was entertained, and that he himself is a pensioner at £500 [£300] a year.'"

The only Lord of Session at whose house Johnson dined was Lord Hailes. Of this dinner Boswell records: 'We spent a most agreeable day; but again I must lament that I was so indolent as to let almost all that passed evaporate into oblivion.' Many years later Hailes sent him 'what he could recollect,' which was next to nothing. 'Was it upon that occasion (he wrote), that Johnson expressed no curiosity to see the room at Dumfermline, where Charles I was born? "I know that he was born (said he); no matter where." Did he envy us the birth-place of the King?' *Life*, v. 398.

<sup>1</sup> This passage was shown me by Mr. W. Keith Leask, who came across it when writing *The Life of Boswell*.

Lord Hailes's recollection, if he is right as to the occasion when this talk took place, certainly tends to confirm one part of Forbes's anecdote—the company did stumble upon kings. Nevertheless, I doubt much the story. In the first place, Forbes, it is clear, was not at the dinner himself. Whatever was said reached him second-hand. A nonjuror would eagerly catch at any report against a Hanoverian King. His 'willingness to believe' he would easily have 'advanced to conviction.' The stories told in Scotland against Johnson required sifting. They were often set afloat by those whose national pride he had offended by his wit. In the second place, had Johnson called the GREAT PERSONAGE an idiot, there would have been, as regards this one utterance, no 'evaporation into oblivion' on Boswell's part. He might, indeed, have suppressed the word 'idiot,' as he suppressed the words used by his 'honoured father' and his 'respected friend' when as 'intellectual gladiators' they contended in the library at Auchinleck; that there was a suppression he would certainly have let his readers know. He would have lamented that from 'the spirit of contradiction,' no longer 'tempered by the reverential awe' which had been felt in the interview with the King, the great moralist 'had grown so outrageous' as to apply to his Majesty a term 'which it would be very unbecoming in me to report.' Johnson spoke roughly enough, no doubt, of the first two Hanoverian Kings. 'George the First (he said), knew nothing, and desired to know nothing; did nothing, and desired to do nothing. . . . He roared with prodigious violence against George the Second.' *Life*, ii. 342. Even after the third George had been two-and-twenty years on the throne he said to Boswell, having first lowered his voice, 'Sir, this Hanoverian family is *isoltée* here.' *ib.* iv. 165. Nevertheless, of the King personally, so far as his biographers show, he always spoke with respect. 'Sir,' he said, 'they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen.' *ib.* ii. 40.

My disbelief of Forbes's anecdote, however, is based, not so much on the improbability of Johnson calling George III an idiot, as on the impossibility of Boswell passing over such an outburst in silence.

(*Vol.* ii. 43.)

Dr. Thomas Campbell, in his account on this page of a dinner at Mr. Thrale's in March, 1775, says that 'the two first courses were served in massy plate.' The abundance of the plate in this house, which the kindness of its master and mistress 'allowed Johnson to call his home' (*Letters*, i. 129), is shown in the Sale Catalogue of Mrs. Piozzi's Library,

Curiosities, &c., a copy of which has been lent me by my friend, Mr. T. Fisher Unwin. Among the three thousand ounces of silver sold was a 'truly magnificent service of one pattern,' consisting of thirty-four dishes and sixty-six plates. The sale was held at Manchester, in September, 1823, and lasted six days. Among the lots were the following Johnsonian relics:—

- 'Lot 430. Auctores Classici—Sallustius, Horatius et Terentius. 3 tom. 8vo. Dub. 1747. On the first leaf is written: "Given by Dr. Johnson to H. L. Thrale, 1770."
- '645. A few interesting Original letters (some in French) [*Letters*, i. 150, 324] in the handwriting of Dr. Johnson.
- '649. "Johnson's Padlock, committed to my care in the year 1768."
- '650. The Grant of the Freedom of Aberdeen to Samuel Johnson, LL.D., on parchment, with a red ribbon and wax seal [*Life*, v. 90; *Letters*, i. 233].
- '716. A Small Red Morocco Pocket-Book, with a medical receipt in Dr. Johnson's own handwriting, with massive metal gilt ornaments round the sides, and lock and key, ivory leaves inside, and denominated in Mrs. P.'s own writing, "THE POCKET BOOK OF DOCTOR JOHNSON."

On the fly-leaf of this catalogue a former owner, James Taylor, 'an antiquarian bookseller,' has recorded that at the sale of 'Mr. Webster's Library at Mr. Evans's,' in April, 1826, £3 15s. was given for a copy of 'Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, 4 vols., 1816, in the most beautiful condition,  $\frac{1}{2}$  bound russia, top edges gilt and front edges uncut, with numerous manuscript notes written in the margin by Mrs. Piozzi.'

(*Vol. ii. 51.*)

Johnson's doubt whether a tree could be found in Scotland for him to be hanged on finds some justification in the following passage in J. H. Burton's *History of Scotland*, ed. 1867, iv. 198, to which my attention has been drawn by Mr. Leask. The historian, describing a raid to the Borders by the Earl of Murray, Queen Mary's brother, to put down the disturbances there, says that fifty-three outlaws were taken, of whom eighteen were drowned 'for lack of trees and halters.'

(*Vol. ii. 79.*)

I have lately seen in a second-hand bookseller's catalogue the following extract from a letter by Johnson dated April 30, 1774, addressed to 'The Rev. Dr. Horne, of Magdalen College, Oxford': 'The *Life of Walton* has happily fallen into good hands. Sir John Hawkins has prefixed it to the late edition of the *Angler*, very diligently collected and very elegantly composed.' Horne in this same year, Boswell writes, 'had talked of publishing an edition of Walton's *Lives*, but had laid aside that design upon Dr. Johnson's telling him, from mistake, that Lord Hailes intended to do it.' *Life*, ii. 279, 283, 445.

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DICTA PHILOSOPHI

A CONCORDANCE OF JOHNSON'S SAYINGS



# *Dicta Philosophi*

## A CONCORDANCE OF JOHNSON'S SAYINGS<sup>1</sup>

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**Abilities.....Cock-boats.**

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A.

**ABILITIES.** 'His abilities are just sufficient, Sir, to enable him to select the black hairs from the white ones for the use of the perwig-makers,' ii. 316.

**ABSTINENCE.** 'Abstinence is as easy to me as temperance would be difficult,' ii. 197.

**ABUSE.** 'Let us hear, Sir, no general abuse; the law is the last result of human wisdom acting upon human experience for the benefit of the public,' i. 223.

**APPETITE.** 'Whoever lays up his penny rather than part with it for a cake at least is not the slave of gross appetite,' i. 251. 'A man who rides out for an appetite consults but little the dignity of human nature,' ii. 10.

**ARGUMENT.** 'You have nothing to do with the motive of counsel, but you ought to weigh their argument,' ii. 409.

**AUTHOR.** 'The best part of every author is in general to be found in his book,' ii. 310.

B.

**BELLY.** 'As if one could fill one's belly with hearing soft murmurs or looking at rough cascades,' i. 323.

**BLACKAMOOR.** 'A talking blackamoor were better than a white creature who adds nothing to life, and by sitting down before one thus desperately silent

takes away the confidence one should have in the company of her chair if she were once out of it,' i. 289.

**BLEMISHES.** 'No man takes upon himself small blemishes without supposing that great abilities are attributed to him,' ii. 153.

**BOOK.** 'A man may hide his head in a hole; he may go into the country, and publish a book now and then which nobody reads, and then complain he is neglected,' i. 315. 'Books without the knowledge of life are useless; for what should books teach but the art of living?' i. 324.

**BREAD-SAUCE.** 'A Brussels trimming is like bread-sauce; it takes away the glow of colour from the gown and gives you nothing instead of it,' i. 338.

**BUSINESS.** 'Fix on some business where much money may be got and little virtue risked,' i. 314.

C.

**CAP.** 'When she wears a large cap I can talk to her,' i. 338.

**CATILINE.** 'He talked to me at club one day concerning Catiline's conspiracy—so I withdrew my attention and thought about Tom Thumb,' i. 203.

**COCK-BOATS.** 'I have sailed a long and painful voyage round the world of the English language; and does he now send out two cock-boats to tow me into harbour?' i. 405.

<sup>1</sup> In this Concordance are not included those of Johnson's sayings which have been already given in the *Dicta Philosophi* at the end of the sixth volume of the *Life*.

## Complainer.....Female.

COMPLAINER. 'I hate a complainer,' ii.

140. 'Complainers are always loud and clamorous,' ii. 20.

CONCEALMENT. 'Those who begin by concealment of innocent things will soon have something to hide which they dare not bring to light,' i. 326.

CONVERSATION. 'Do not be like the spider, man, and spin conversation thus incessantly out of thy own bowels,' i. 276. 'Why, Sir, his conversation does not show the minute hand, but he strikes the hour very correctly,' ii. 169.

CREAKED. 'When a door has creaked for a fortnight together, you may observe the master will scarcely give sixpence to get it oiled,' i. 264.

## D.

DEATH. 'When Death's pale horse runs away with persons on full speed an active physician may possibly give them a turn; but if he carries them on an even slow pace, down hill too, no care nor skill can save them,' i. 276.

DECEPTION. 'Sir, don't tell me of deception; a lie, Sir, is a lie, whether it be a lie to the eye or a lie to the ear,' ii. 428.

DEGENERATING. 'To get cows from Alderney or waterfowl from China only to see nature degenerating round one is a poor ambition indeed,' i. 324.

DELICACY. 'Delicacy does not surely consist in impossibility to be pleased,' i. 329.

DELICATE. 'If a wench wants a good gown do not give her a fine smelling-bottle because that is more delicate,' i. 326.

DESPISES. 'No man thinks much of that which he despises,' ii. 245.

DIGNITY. 'Why, Madam, if a creature is neither capable of giving dignity to falsehood, nor is willing to remain contented with the truth, he deserves no better treatment,' i. 243.

DINNER. 'A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table than when his wife talks Greek,' ii. 11.

DISGRACE. 'That dunce of a fellow helped forward the general disgrace of humanity,' i. 294.

DISLIKE. 'Lasting dislike is often the consequence of occasional disgust,' i. 246.

DIVERSION. 'You hunt in the morning and crowd to the public rooms at night, and call it diversion; when your heart knows it is perishing with poverty of pleasures, and your wits get blunted for want of some other mind to sharpen them upon,' i. 324.

DOGMATISE. 'I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight,' ii. 92.

DONE. 'Where there is nothing to be done something must be endured,' i. 210.

DOUBT. 'My dear, I must always doubt of that which has not yet happened,' ii. 207.

DWARF. 'Chesterfield ought to know me better than to think me capable of contracting myself into a dwarf that he may be thought a giant,' i. 405.

## E.

EASE. 'Contented with the exchange of fame for ease he e'en resolves to let them set the pillows at his back, and gives no further proof of his existence than just to suck the jelly that prolongs it,' i. 282.

EYES. 'The eyes of the mind are like the eyes of the body, they can see but at such a distance. But because we cannot see beyond this point, is there nothing beyond it?' ii. 287.

## F.

FEMALE. 'And this is the voice of female friendship, I suppose, when the hand of the hangman would be softer,' i. 331.

Folio.....Manner.

FOLIO. 'No man reads long together with a folio on his table,' ii. 2.

FORGOTTEN. 'I hope the day will never arrive when I shall be the object of neither calumny nor ridicule, for then I shall be neglected and forgotten,' ii. 420.

FRIENDS. 'We must either outlive our friends or our friends must outlive us; and I see no man that would hesitate about the choice,' i. 230.

G.

GAIETY. 'Those who resist gaiety will be likely for the most part to fall a sacrifice to appetite,' i. 219.

GENIUS. 'Never ask a baby of seven years old which way his genius leads him, when we all know that a boy of seven years old has no genius for anything except a peg-top and an apple-pie,' i. 314.

GUINEAS. 'Why did not the King make these halfpence guineas?' i. 172.

H.

HELL. 'I do allow him just enough [*lumières*] to light him to hell,' i. 211.

HOARDING. 'A fellow must do something; and what so easy to a narrow mind as hoarding halfpence till they turn into sixpences?' i. 251.

HONOUR. 'Well, Sir; if you do not see the honour I am sure I feel the disgrace,' i. 285.

HOPE. 'Hope is an amusement rather than a good, and is adapted to none but very tranquil minds,' i. 278.

HUNTING. 'Hunting is the labour of the savages of North America, but the amusement of the gentlemen of England,' ii. 170.

I.

IGNORANCE. 'Ignorance to a wealthy lad of one-and-twenty is only so much fat to a sick sheep; it just serves to call the rooks about him,' i. 281.

L.

LACED. 'If every man who wears a laced coat, that he can pay for, was extirpated, who would miss them?' i. 253.

LIFE. 'Life is a pill which none of us can bear to swallow without gilding; yet for the poor we delight in stripping it still barer, and are not ashamed to show even visible displeasure if ever the bitter taste is taken from their mouths,' i. 205; 'Life must be filled up, and the man who is not capable of intellectual pleasures must content himself with such as his senses can afford,' i. 251; 'Life is barren enough surely with all her trappings; let us therefore be cautious how we strip her,' i. 345.

LITERATURE. 'A mere literary man is a dull man; a man who is solely a man of business is a selfish man; but when literature and commerce are united they make a respectable man,' ii. 389.

LONDON. 'Whoever has once experienced the full flow of London talk, when he retires to country friendships and rural sports, must either be contented to turn baby again and play with the rattle, or he will pine away like a great fish in a little pond, and die for want of his usual food,' i. 324.

LOVE. 'Love is the wisdom of a fool and the folly of the wise,' ii. 393.

LOVER. 'The companion of the easy vacant hour, whose compliance with a girl's opinions can flatter her vanity, and whose conversation can just soothe, without ever stretching her mind, that is the lover to be feared,' i. 220.

LUXURIOUS. 'Depend upon it, Sir, every state of society is as luxurious as it can be,' ii. 97.

LUMPS. 'One cannot love lumps of flesh, and little infants are nothing more,' i. 328.

M.

MAD. 'Five hours of the four and twenty unemployed are enough for a man to go mad in,' i. 301.

MANNER. 'A new manner of writing!

**Manuscript.....Scoundrel.**

- Buckinger had no hands, and he wrote his name with his toes at Charing Cross for half a crown apiece; that was a new manner of writing,' i. 419.
- MANUSCRIPT. 'Praise is the tribute which every man is expected to pay for the grant of perusing a manuscript,' ii. 192.
- MARRY. 'A man should marry first, for virtue; secondly, for wit; thirdly, for beauty; and fourthly, for money,' ii. 8.
- MEAN. 'Sir, if you mean nothing, say nothing,' ii. 400.
- MEAT. 'What signifies going thither? There is neither meat, drink, nor talk,' ii. 14.
- MIRROR. 'They see men who have merited their advancement by the exertion and improvement of those talents which God had given them; and I see not why they should avoid the mirror,' i. 349.
- MIRTH. 'The size of a man's understanding may always be justly measured by his mirth,' i. 345.
- MONKEY. 'Let him be absurd, I beg of you; when a monkey is too like a man, it shocks one,' i. 204.
- MONEY. 'Why, the men are thinking on their money, I suppose, and the women are thinking on their mops,' i. 253.
- MUSIC. 'Music excites in my mind no ideas, and hinders me from contemplating my own,' ii. 103; 'Music is the only sensual pleasure without vice,' ii. 301. 'Difficult do you call it, Sir? I wish it were impossible,' ii. 308.
- MYSTERY. 'Where secrecy or mystery begins, vice or roguery is not far off,' ii. 1.
- O.
- OCEAN. 'Never mind it, Sir; perhaps your friend spells *ocean* with an *s*,' ii. 404.
- P.
- PAINTING. 'I had rather see the portrait of a dog that I know than all the allegorical paintings they can show me in the world,' ii. 15.
- PHLEBOTOMISED. 'You might as well bid him tell you who phlebotomised Romulus,' i. 294.
- PLANTS. 'He who plants a forest may doubtless cut down a hedge; yet I could wish, methinks, that even he would wait till he sees his young plants grow,' i. 345.
- POKER. 'Why yes, Sir, they'll do any thing, no matter how odd or desperate, to gain their point; they'll catch hold of the red-hot end of a poker sooner than not get possession of it,' ii. 397.
- PULSE. 'This man has a pulse in his tongue,' ii. 18.
- PUPPY. 'When in anger my mother called me a puppy, I asked her if she knew what they called a puppy's mother,' i. 163.
- R.
- RATTLE-BOX. 'There certainly is no harm in a fellow's rattling a rattle-box; only don't let him think that he thunders,' i. 286.
- RELIGION. 'A principle of honour or fear of the world will many times keep a man in decent order; but when a woman loses her religion she, in general, loses the only tie that will restrain her actions,' ii. 309.
- RESENTMENT. 'The cup of life is surely bitter enough without squeezing in the hateful rind of resentment,' i. 246.
- S.
- SCONCED. 'Sir, you have sconced me twopence for non-attendance at a lecture not worth a penny,' i. 164.
- SCOTLAND. 'I give you leave to say, and you may quote me for it, that there are more gentlemen in Scotland than there are shoes,' ii. 77.
- SCOUNDREL. 'It is so very difficult for a sick man not to be a scoundrel,' i. 267; 'Ready to become a scoundrel, Madam; with a little more spoiling you will, I think, make me a complete rascal,' ib.; 'A man is a scoundrel that is afraid of anything,' ii. 4; 'Who-

**Scruples.....Written.**

ever thinks of going to bed before twelve o'clock is a scoundrel,' ii. 19.

SCRUPLES. 'Scruples would certainly make men miserable, and seldom make them good,' i. 223.

SENTIMENTAL. 'The poor and the busy have no leisure for sentimental sorrow,' i. 252.

SILVER. 'If silver is dirty it is not the less valuable for a good scouring,' ii. 414.

SOLITARY. 'The solitary mortal is certainly luxurious, probably superstitious, and possibly mad,' i. 219.

SOLITUDE. 'Solitude is dangerous to reason without being favourable to virtue,' i. 219.

STORY. 'A story is a specimen of human manners, and derives its sole value from its truth,' i. 225.

SUFFER. 'She will suffer as much perhaps as your horse did when your cow miscarried,' i. 207.

SUNDAY. 'While half the Christian world is permitted to dance and sing, and celebrate Sunday as a day of festivity, how comes your puritanical spirit so offended with frivolous and empty deviations from exactness?' i. 301.

SWIM. 'No man, I suppose, leaps at once into deep water who does not know how to swim,' i. 165.

T.

TAVERN. 'No, Sir; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn,' ii. 253.

TEA. 'Sir, I did not count your glasses of wine; why should you number up my cups of tea?' ii. 75.

TELL. 'A man can tell but what he knows, and I never got any further than the first page,' i. 332.

TIMIDITY. 'How many men in a year die through the timidity of those whom they consult for health!' ii. 132.

U.

UNDER-DRESSED. 'No person goes under-dressed till he thinks himself of consequence enough to forbear carrying the badge of his rank upon his back,' i. 221.

UNDERSTANDING. 'You feed the chickens till you starve your own understanding,' i. 323.

V.

VIRTUES. 'Sir, these minor virtues are not to be exercised in matters of such importance as this,' ii. 124.

W.

WHIG. 'Take it upon my word and experience that where you see a Whig you see a rascal,' ii. 393.

WOLF. 'The wolf does not count the sheep,' i. 168.

WOMAN. 'In matters of business no woman stops at integrity,' i. 327.

WORLD. 'He is a scholar undoubtedly; but remember that he would run from the world, and that it is not the world's business to run after him,' i. 315; 'Where is the world into which I was born?' ii. 207; 'I thought it wiser and better to take the world as it goes,' ii. 259.

WRITES. 'Every man who writes thinks he can amuse or inform mankind, and they must be the best judges of his pretensions,' ii. 7.

WRITINGS. 'Never mind whether they praise or abuse your writings; anything is tolerable except oblivion,' ii. 207.

WRITTEN. 'What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure,' ii. 309.

THE END.



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